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DECEMBER 18, 1995

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Henry Louis Gates Jr. on Nigeria • Louis Menand on William & Henry J

CLINTON'S BOSNIAN GAMBLE

WHY THE TROOPS SHOULD GO

The Editors

A PEACE THAT MEANS WAR

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

DECEMBER 18, 1995

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WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,222

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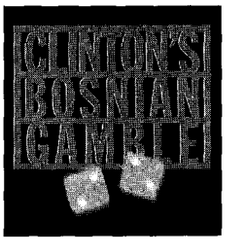

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 213, Number 25, Issue 4,222, December 18, 1995. (Printed in the U.S. on November 29, 1995.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 9 & 16, July 17 & 24, Aug. 21 & 28, and Sept. 18 & 25, 1995) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1995 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Modern maturity

To the editors:

"Pulp Fiction," Michael Walzer's review of *The Moral Compass* by William Bennett (November 27), informs us that the Republican holy man's new 111 pages on familial love do not contain the word "divorce."

This is strange, since in the March issue of *Modern Maturity* Bennett blamed all the moral anarchy in America on divorce. Which was even stranger, considering that all of his political GOP paragons like Reagan, Dole, Gingrich and Gramm are upright Christian divorce trendsetters. Not to forget the Great Taboo-Breaker's own two dysfunctional families.

Is it any wonder that Bennett has to scrounge antique tales for moral role models in order to get Republicans elected who will lead the rest of us "abnormals" out of their own wilderness?

ROBERT J. STEIN
Lynn, North Carolina

Anxiety prone

To the editors:

In his essay on aging ("The Age of Anxiety," November 20) Alan Wolfe seems to feel that the fact that the current generation of oldsters was forced to go through the Great Depression and World War Two trumps all other considerations, including that of a balanced budget. But was the current oldsters fate so painful and unique in all history that it accords them unlimited moral claim upon the wallets of every other generation behind them?

Even when the medical costs of aging are factored in, the young quite often face far greater expenses in life than the old because they are struggling to get started in life, attempting to pay for a house and facing the expenses of raising children. Oldsters usually have their children out of the house and independent by the time they reach their "Golden Years." Retirees often have moved out of their original house and into a less expensive retirement condo or community, and quite a number of current oldsters have solid pensions behind them along with Social Security and other forms of entitlement payments that are rarely means-tested. Meanwhile the young see their incomes stagnate while their paychecks are steadily squeezed by increasing taxes of all kinds.

ROBERT B. BEATTY
Naperville, Illinois

Heavenly body

To the editors:

Kudos to Matthew Cooper for his perspicacious article on two very similar Dicks ("Dicks," November 20). One argument of his seems unconvincing, however: that Dick Morris would use "eschatological terms" about anything. I always pegged him for—if not an outright atheist—at least a committed agnostic. A more cogent line of analysis might connect Morris with scatology (e.g., "They're fucking us blue"), which he seems to engage in quite liberally (and conservatively, for that matter). On the other hand, perhaps Cooper is on to something. A bit of eschatology might do just the trick for Morris. If he fails to get President Clinton re-elected, he could claim that Republican victory (the ephemeral triumph of evil over good) is actually a prerequisite for the glorious Second Coming. Plus, he might become acceptable to two potential new clients, namely, the two Pats: Robertson and Buchanan.

STEPHEN SILVER
Manhattan, New York

Forest for the trees

To the editors:

I read Derek Walcott's piece on Robert Frost ("The Road Taken," November 27) with great pleasure; in support of his contention that Frost's "Stopping by Woods" "darkens with terror in every homily," I'd like to suggest an alternative (but complementary) reading of the poem's second line. The house in the village is the church; the woods belong—perhaps—to God. The words "I think I know" in the first line and the words "his woods" (as opposed to "His woods") in the fourth line are thus meant to suggest the speaker's sudden doubt about God's presence. Underneath its folksy surface, the poem describes a nightmare: a vision of existence darkened, silenced and frozen by God's absence and humanity's duty to slog on in the face of that bleak and bone-chilling possibility.

GEORGE SULLIVAN
Alexandria, Virginia

Adolescent, trite and pathetic

To the editors:

Jonathan Chait's "Leave Me Alone" in the December 4 issue was adolescent, trite and pathetic. His deliberate refusal

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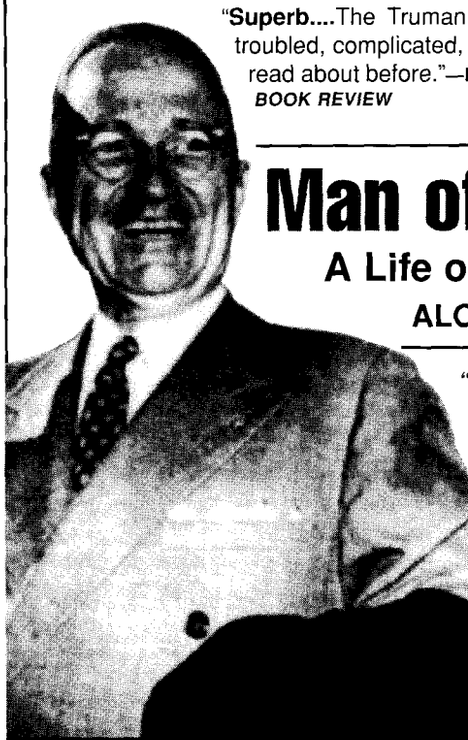

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to pay for goods and services that he has purchased is nothing more than theft. Perhaps because he is a "writer" he feels that he is not obligated by the same responsibilities that other adults and citizens take for granted.

How would Chait feel if THE NEW REPUBLIC refused to pay his bill, as agreed, for his piece and instead strung him along until he was forced to hire a bill collector? I suspect he would be outraged at his treatment, although "entitled" when the shoe is on the other foot. Mr. Chait, grow up, or leave us alone.

HAROLD E. BRONHEIM
New York, New York

Tax cuts

To the editors:

I hereby invite *The Wall Street Journal* to nominate THE NEW REPUBLIC for the Nobel Prize in economics. TNR has, in its December 4 editorial, "Tax Evasion," turned the world of economics upside down with its editors' profound insights. Specifically, whereas we had previously thought that *taxes* were a burden, it is in fact tax cuts that are "onerous." Whereas we had previously thought that a per-child tax credit was areligious, TNR blows the lid off the scam by revealing it as a Machiavellian ploy of religious kooks. And tax credits are inherently unfair since only those who pay taxes can take advantage of them. Next week from TNR: war is peace, freedom is slavery.

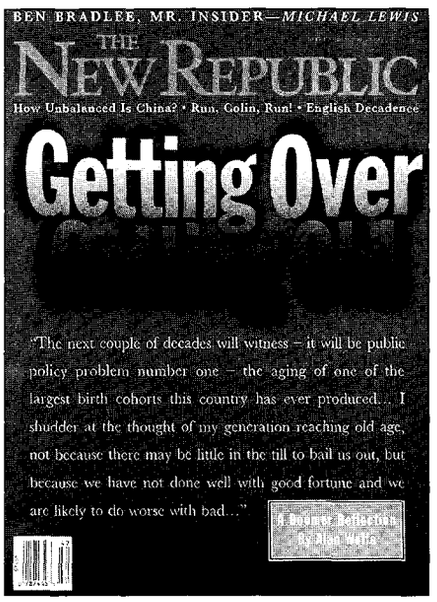
JOHN C. CONTI
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Reasonable doubt

To the editors:

Leon Wieseltier gets many things right and the one big thing wrong in "Isreality" (November 27). Yes, some of the Israeli right and their American supporters have gone beyond decency, and yes, they must be fought hard and now. And yes, too, Likud did too little to draw the line between respectable and indecent opposition to the government. As well, it is easy and largely correct to see in Netanyahu's current appeals to democratic solidarity a tactical response to shame and humiliation. It is also understandable that the Israeli left and its American supporters like Wieseltier now see a chance to combine genuine indignation with their own tactical cunning in a campaign to squeeze the last ounce of guilt out of Likud. But it is a folly that will end up hurting the Israeli left, Israel and all Jews. The shock created by the assassination of Rabin does in fact create a very brief opportunity to re-establish on all sides a somewhat less poisonous political atmosphere. Shame is surely the main explanation for the overtures coming from Likud. But the left, which in the end stands or falls by the project of creating, both abroad and at home, the normalcy Wieseltier rightly praises, should treat these overtures with more respect than they actually think they deserve and then find ways to charge in the coin of reciprocal civility. As the assassination demonstrates, "so's your mother" politics do not create a political world tolerable to decent democrats. This sounds naïve, I know, but is in fact naïve only on the assumption that, while one can deal with Arafat and Assad, the whole opposition is wholly intractable. And that way lies everything Jews associate with the word "zealotry."

Wieseltier hides this unpalatable


BEN BRADLEE, MR. INSIDER—MICHAEL LEWIS
THE NEW REPUBLIC
How Unbalanced Is China? • Run, Colin, Run! • English Decadence
Getting Over
"The next couple of decades will witness – it will be public policy problem number one – the aging of one of the largest birth cohorts this country has ever produced... I shudder at the thought of my generation reaching old age, not because there may be little in the till to bail us out, but because we have not done well with good fortune and we are likely to do worse with bad..."

thought from himself by indulging in a dangerous fantasy, wherein a lasting peace with all Arabs is already assured, and nothing remains to be done but the easy and pleasant task of seeing that the demons of the right "really are crushed." But the odds are far better that the Israeli right will be around for quite a while and that there are also some very tough times ahead for all Israelis. If so, missing the chance to establish some norms of decent behavior, and even of some degree of mutual trust, may prove tragic, especially and above all to the heirs of Yitzhak Rabin.

FRED BAUMANN
Gambier, Ohio

To the editors:

A thought on your report of Likudnik culture ("Swamp Man," November 27): the excuse for evil acts used to be, "The Devil made me do it"; now it's "God made me do it." Neither excuse enjoys the benefit of reason—the faculty that, reputedly, elevates mankind above the rest of creation.

KAY L. REES
Lafayette, Louisiana

Greek to me

To the editors:

The strange thing about all the negative reviews of Woody Allen's latest movie, *Mighty Aphrodite*, is that they differ so drastically in what they attack. Without cataloguing the others, I'd say that Stanley Kauffmann chose the "Woody is bankrupt approach," calling the film derivative of several sources. This kind of cheap assessment can be applied to any film, and it always ends up nothing but cheap. Arthur Koestler would agree. Yes, of course there are prostitute stories, and yes, of course there are old anachronistic joke sequences, but I cannot remember a story in which a mortal man finds a suitable mate for the prostitute-mother of his child and, furthermore, never reveals anybody's identity to anybody. Nor have I seen a classical chorus make the romantic permutations and combinations of us mortals seem so ridiculous.

Then, Kauffmann is so mad he even takes a back-swipe at *Bullets Over Broadway* as having been spawned by Damon Runyon. Again, I cannot remember a story in which an illiterate thug outwrites a trained playwright and becomes so involved he kills the leading lady.

When it comes to assessing Allen as an actor—ah-hah! Kauffmann really shows his hand. Hamlet to The Players, indeed!

What a shame these films were not the work of some unknown filmmaker. There would have been raves, and Kauffmann's would have been one of them. For, alas, all these critics are motivated by only one thing, wittingly and unwittingly: their disapproval of the personal life of Woody Allen.

PAUL ALTER
Los Angeles, California

One does?

To the editors:

I am interested in obtaining a translation of Laura Jacobs's article on Geoffrey Beene ("Beene There," November 20). Though my sartorial vocabulary had always seemed adequate, I found this piece entirely inaccessible.

In particular, I'd like to know what the following phrases mean: " ... one thinks of those Regency tucks at the shoulder blades, the screen-siren sheaths, the Secessionists' pointed geometries." One does?

MAGGIE DAVIS
Boston, Massachusetts

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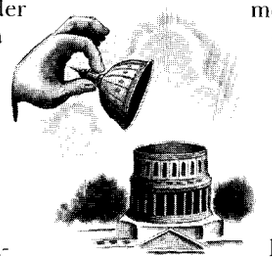
FROM WASHINGTON

Irish ayes

Shortly before Ireland's referendum on legalizing divorce, the Irish novelist Colm Tóibín came upon a downtown Dublin gathering of Catholics who opposed the measure. In a subsequent op-ed piece, Tóibín wrote that, if he had happened upon such a group a few years earlier, "I would have despised them and wondered how I could share a country with a majority that seemed so locked into intolerance." But since then his attitude had shifted from contempt to something more like pity. He had begun "trying to understand how hard it is for traditional Roman Catholics in Ireland to face the changes around them." That's nice of him. Maybe traditional Roman Catholics will reciprocate by trying to understand the roots of his annoying condescension. What makes him so quick to assume that the Catholic position on divorce has no rational basis?

I suppose that if I were Irish, I would have voted, along with Tóibín and 50.3 percent of the electorate, to legalize divorce. But I wouldn't have treated the opposition as a curious relic of a simpler age. The fact is that legalized divorce may well make the Irish, on balance, worse off. The failure of people like Tóibín to even consider this possibility exemplifies a general failure of modern liberalism to deal seriously with complex moral issues.



Readers familiar with my worldview can skip this paragraph. It's about how evolutionary psychologists have shown beyond a reasonable doubt that *(a)* neither the male nor the female mind was designed for eternal, unswerving monogamous devotion; and *(b)* males, in particular, have a distinct polygamous bent. Whether that bent will surface depends on circumstance. And one circumstance is the social inequality found in modern industrial societies. When some men find themselves with great status and wealth, while other men don't, the former men feel a budding sense of entitlement. In the social environment of our evolution they might simply have acquired a second wife. But in the modern world, where polygamy is taboo, acquiring an alluring new wife means dumping the old one. As an Irish woman put the matter a decade ago, "A woman voting for divorce is like a turkey voting for Christmas."

Of course, divorce can liberate women, too. Indeed, women often feel more desperately trapped by marriage than men. Still, the source of their oppression is often the obnoxious maleness of their husbands. Ultimately, the largest single source of marital discontent is that human beings evolved amid male polygamy.

And no social change is likely to wholly erase the resulting asymmetries. Thus, women may keep growing less dependent on men for their status and income. But independently wealthy or high-status wives will on average not feel as strong an extramarital pull as comparable husbands. Nor will such women, on average, feel as able as men to part with children upon divorce.

All of this suggests that when constraints on divorce are lifted a predictable scenario will ensue. In his op-ed piece, Tóibín said the anti-divorce campaign used "outrageous" tactics—such as billboards that read, "Hello divorce, goodbye daddy." Call me outrageous, but that's exactly the predictable scenario I had in mind. Ireland will now see an increase in the number of children reared without their biological fathers.

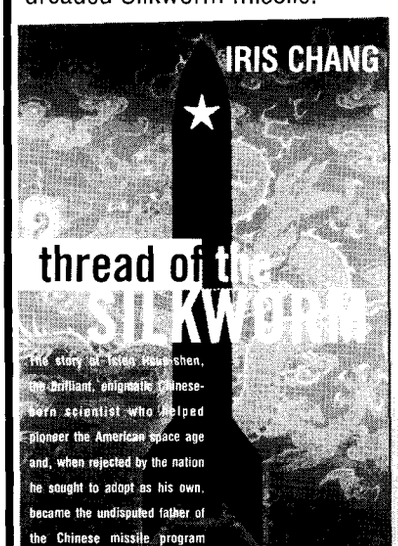
What's wrong with that? Often nothing. Still, a Darwinian expects that, *on average*, the natural father will be more devoted to the child's welfare than a stepfather. And evolutionary psychologists have confirmed this expectation. In America in 1976, a child was about 100 times more likely to be fatally abused if living with one or more substitute parents than if living with two natural parents. For non-fatal abuse the numbers were milder but still jarring. Children were, depending on their age and the particular study, from three to forty times more likely to be abused if living with a step-parent and a natural parent than if living with two natural parents.

This is an example (and hardly the only one) of how human nature makes for tough tradeoffs. Yes, those stories about Irish couples denied the right to legally remarry after separation are sad. But legalizing divorce will lead to sad

continued on page 45

HOW A VICTIM OF McCARTHYISM BECAME THE FATHER OF THE CHINESE MISSILE PROGRAM.

Iris Chang has written a spellbinding biography of Dr. Tsien Hsue-shen, who, at the height of his career in the American space program, was accused of spying and deported to China—only to embarrass America by creating the dreaded Silkworm missile.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THE NEW REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 18, 1995

WHY THE TROOPS SHOULD GO

Dayton, Ohio, has become the capital, for our time, of a lachrymose truth about human affairs: that peace is not the same thing as justice. Considered unloftily, peace is a kind of complicity with the outcome of war. And war is not the same thing as justice, either. There are just peaces and unjust peaces, just wars and unjust wars. Like unjust wars, just wars bring suffering. Like just peaces, unjust peaces bring relief from suffering. And suffering, too, is morally diversified: there are circumstances in which it is acceptable and circumstances in which it is not acceptable. There are causes for which a people will agree to suffer greatly. And yet there are no causes for which a people will agree to suffer completely, unto extinction. And so there are times when the wronged will be forced, for moral and practical reasons, to dignify what has wronged them, so as to stop it. Practical reasons are moral reasons, for victims. That is their final humiliation. They are innocent, and they must be realists! They must, for their own sake, lose their interest in justice.

These thoughts we offer as an exegesis of Alija Izetbegovic's face, of the haunted, sickened countenance with which he shook the hands of the men who almost managed to destroy his country completely, and initialed the diplomatic instrument that delivered half of Bosnia to the people who raped, tortured and murdered their way to what they now call Republika Srpska. This generation should hear in the words "Republika Srpska" the same sort of shorthand, the same sort of warning, the same sort of obscenity, that an earlier generation heard in the word "Sudetenland." A genocidal war has succeeded in realizing fully half of its political and territorial aims. In Dayton, power spat at tragedy; and there were toasts.

The "General Framework Agreement For Peace In Bosnia and Herzegovina" is, in truth, a lawyerly agreement of partition. It does not condemn the consequences of ethnic cleansing, it codifies them. The Bosnians had two objectives, in the last four years, as they struggled to survive: to save Bosnia as a state and to save Bosnia as a multiethnic polity. In Dayton, the latter was sacrificed to the former. The Bosnian state that has survived, moreover, is a weak and inchoate state, with a mini-state of its enemies in its midst. (The internal division of the country is marked by what the Dayton document calls, for lack of a better euphemism for partition, "the inter-entity boundary.") Its high rhetoric notwithstanding, the United States has brokered a chilly, realpolitikal deal that enshrines the balance of power in the Balkans, the domination of the region by Serbia and Croatia. Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman tried once to carve up Bosnia, and they partially succeeded. How long will this shell of Bosnia stay their hands?

All this is the case; and yet opposition to the Dayton agreement would be the height of moral and political irresponsibility. Genocide has a way of lowering the standard for peace. A recent CIA report bluntly concluded that "more than half of Bosnia's pre-war population of 4,365,000 has either fled the country, been displaced within the country, or been killed"; and so, measured against the reality of the Balkans, against the certain fate of Bosnia in the absence of American intervention, this imperfect accord, which seems to have been accomplished by the bullying of the Bosnians, is an important achievement.

Finally the United States returned to its senses, or

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more precisely, to its values and its interests, and demonstrated that it is the only power in the world that can put a stop to such crimes, which are not only a stain upon the West but also a threat to its stability. In halting the war in the Balkans, the Clinton administration has acted expediently (its inaction was becoming an embarrassment, at home and abroad), but it has acted wisely. The Balkans are in Europe—not merely our "sphere of influence," but our world. A major war in southern Europe, and the population of refugees that it has produced, is not strategically acceptable.

And even more pressing is the moral argument for American action. In the siege of Sarajevo, it was pluralism, the American dispensation, that was besieged. There are enormities that we tolerate only at the risk of our philosophy. The United States owes its sway in the world not least to its philosophy, to the almost universal impression that it is a good and tolerant country, a country that leaves people alone but does not leave evil alone, a country that will find the courage to act where the courage to act is wanting. We are not the world's policeman, but we are not the world's innocent bystander. We say that genocide must be stopped, and we take seriously what we say, and we have the power to stop it. To do nothing about Bosnia would steal the meaning from the American victory in the cold war, which was not primarily about markets.

Which brings us to the dicey part. The Dayton agreement calls for a "multinational military Implementation Force," or IFOR, consisting of 60,000 troops from twenty-five countries, and 20,000 of the IFOR troops are supposed to be American. This deployment is an essential element of the arrangement. You cannot be for the Dayton deal and against the Implementation Force: even a perfunctory look at this war will show that this peace will have to be monitored and assisted. Thus President Clinton, in a rare act of political courage, is proposing to dispatch American troops in an election season. This is concentrating American minds. There are many Americans who can imagine nothing worse in the world than putting an American soldier at risk. Some of them are isolationists, some are Republican presidential candidates, some are disciples of the Powell doctrine, some are of the view that this is a European problem. All of them are wrong.

It is tiresome, this American search for a risk-free military mission. There is no such military mission. That is why armies are armed. Let us be clear. It is very unlikely that not a single American soldier will be wounded or killed in Bosnia. But we must consider the risks rationally. IFOR will be the first peacekeeping force in Bosnia that will be keeping a peace. This force is being deployed at the wishes of Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia, not (like the U.N. "peacekeeping" force) against their wishes. It will have the cooperation of these states and their military establishments. The threat to IFOR will come from "renegade elements": nasty, but surely nothing that American troops cannot handle. (Powellism is a little insulting to the American soldier.) And the rules of engagement will be fierce and un-Somalian: American troops will be under American command, and they "will have the authority to respond immediately," according to President Clinton, "and the training and the equipment to respond with overwhelming force." The American mission will be strictly defined and strictly limited in duration.

Are these conditions too dangerous for an American operation? Then all conditions, except the condition of Operation Desert Storm, are too dangerous for an American operation. The problem is not "mission creep" in Bosnia. The problem is Powell creep in Washington. (If "mission creep" means that American soldiers will interpose themselves between the survivors of Srebrenica and the slaughterers of Srebrenica, and physically prevent rapists from raping and killers from killing, then "mission creep" is a noble creep, and long overdue.) If the United States does not lead, nobody will be led. To say that the Europeans should do it is to say that it will not be done.

Dayton established one thing incontrovertibly. It established that Europe is, politically and psychologically, an illusion. For four years, the Europeans responded to the European horrors by dining and dodging. In 1991, Jacques Poos, the foreign minister of Luxembourg, speaking for the European Community, pronounced that "the hour of Europe has dawned." In 1991! He was demanding, as Timothy Garton Ash writes in a trenchant essay called "Bosnia In Our Future," in *The New York Review of Books*, that "America should kindly leave this problem to us Europeans" and

> ever since that aptly ridiculous moment, the states supposedly united in what is now called the European Union, and especially Britain, France, and Germany, have been directly involved in what has happened. At least since the imposition of the arms embargo on Bosnia, we have directly affected the military balance of this war and become, willy nilly, a party to the destruction ... the double-think is truly surreal. "War in Europe has become unthinkable," say our leaders. Crash go the shells into Sarajevo and Srebrenica and a thousand other towns and villages.

It is passing strange to think that the United States must repair to Europe fifty years later, but it is passing strange to think many things about Europe fifty years later.

We do not mean to suggest that Bill Clinton has become a figure of Rooseveltian dimensions. The speech with which he sought to persuade his country of the rightness of his course was flat and wan. (The president seems to believe that his new Bosnia policy is of a piece with his old Bosnia policy.) And yet his course is the right one. "Nowhere today is the need for American leadership more stark or more immediate than in Bosnia," he said. Oh, to have heard those words before today. But they are true today, too. In Bosnia, the moral stakes are large and the strategic stakes are not small. For the reasons that these American troops are being deployed, and in the circumstances in which they are being deployed, we support their deployment. Bill Clinton seems to have learned the lesson of the Balkans. Who knows when he will unlearn it? The time, as they say, is now. •

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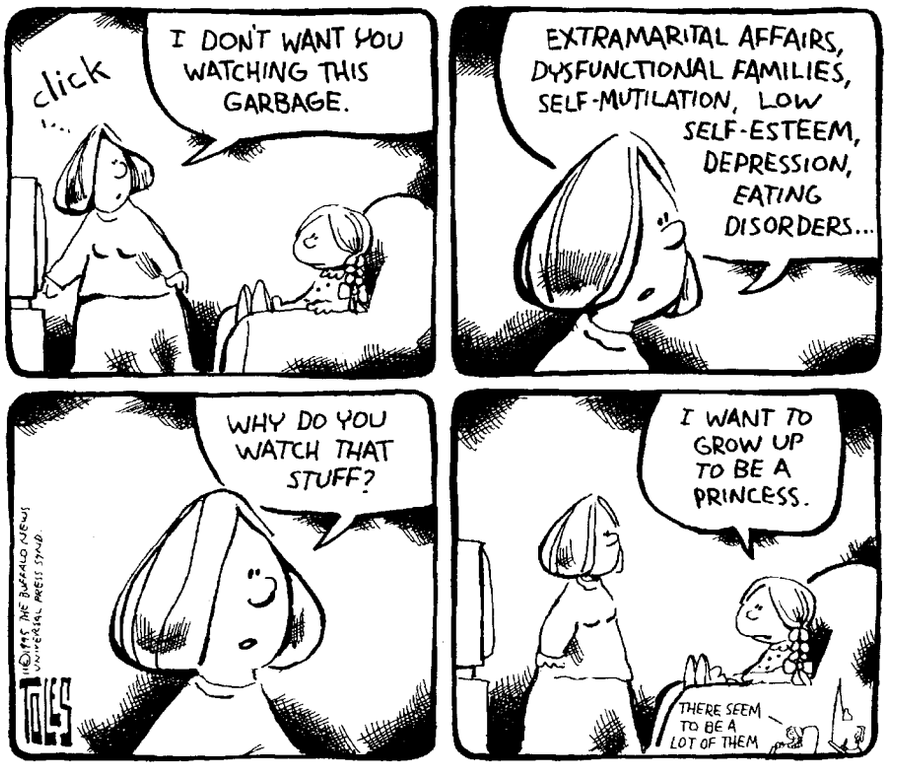
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: The Oakland Ballet pulled a billboard advertising campaign stating, "Go ahead, take another date to miniature golf and die a virgin. Oakland Ballet. You just might like it." ... President Clinton and Vice President Gore formally apologized to federal workers classified as "nonessential" during the budget impasse.... Johnnie Cochran will receive the Olender Foundation Advocate for Justice Award.... The National Institute of Mental Health awarded a $104,055 grant to study how people communicate through facial expressions.... Ralph Nader has agreed to run as the Green Party candidate for president.... Frank Zappa will be memorialized with a statue in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius.... The Pentagon has spent approximately $11 million employing citizens with suspected paranormal powers to provide military information.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I DON'T WANT YOU WATCHING THIS GARBAGE.
EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRS, DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES, SELF-MUTILATION, LOW SELF-ESTEEM, DEPRESSION, EATING DISORDERS...
WHY DO YOU WATCH THAT STUFF?
I WANT TO GROW UP TO BE A PRINCESS.
THERE SEEM TO BE A LOT OF THEM
TOLES

DI-GRESSION: Until her recent interview on television, most people had considered Princess Diana not only estranged from Prince Charles, but also from the English language. Her previous confessions have been painfully halting, strewn with banalities and the kind of solecisms that only an expensive English private school can arrange. Her television appearance changed all that. Fluent and witty, she confessed to adultery with Captain James Hewitt, complained about Charles's adultery with Camilla Parker-Bowles ("there were three of us in this marriage"), blamed the Queen's court ("the enemy") for many of her troubles and suggested that neither she nor he would ever reach the throne. This polished performance suggested intensive coaching, and, in *The New York Times*, the British writer A.N. Wilson fingered various tutors, including the Australian TV star Clive James and the former editor of *The Spectator*, Dominic Lawson, and his wife, Rosa, all of them close to the Princess. In fact, Wilson went further, accusing right-wing republicans such as Lawson and, by implication, the Canadian newspaper magnate Conrad Black (whose British newspapers regularly bash the royals) of encouraging the Princess in her vendettas, the better to bring about their great plan: the destruction of the monarchy. This cabal, according to Wilson, hates Charles for his liberalism and harbors a Thatcherite disdain for the Queen. Of late, Wilson's preposterous argument has become a popular conspiracy theory in Britain. But it is itself a conspiracy. Wilson is a fogeyish royalist who believes in the status quo and the longevity of traditional institutions and is faced with the monarchy's self-destruction. Who can he blame? Not the people who are truly at fault, the royals themselves, because to do so is to attack "the institution" of the throne. Instead, blame a shady group of Canadian-Australian colonials and un-English free-market ideologues for the current low popularity of the crown. Much simpler!

ASSAD VENTURE: As we write some 250,000 Israelis across the Galilee have gone underground into the safety of their shelters. The onslaught of rockets from the Syrian protectorate of Lebanon is the heaviest in nearly fifteen years. The men who launched the rockets are, of course, not Syrians but the party of God *jihad* militia, armed and financed by Iran, courtesy of Damascus. In truth, of course, everything that happens in Lebanon is courtesy of Damascus. Still, even when Israel retaliates at the *jihad* bases, it's often innocent Lebanese, and not the Syrians, who face the consequences. These have been the rules of the game since 1982. Syria keeps its own frontier with Israel quiet and, in return, Israel doesn't disturb either the peace or the U.N. peacemakers. And it never challenges Syria itself, including the more than 30,000-strong Syrian occupation army. Many Israelis have believed for years that this policy is bankrupt, although some thought it prudent as a way to entice Syria into the peace talks. (What isn't to be done to entice Syria into the peace talks!) Those people are now saying this latest assault must really be a message from Hafez al-

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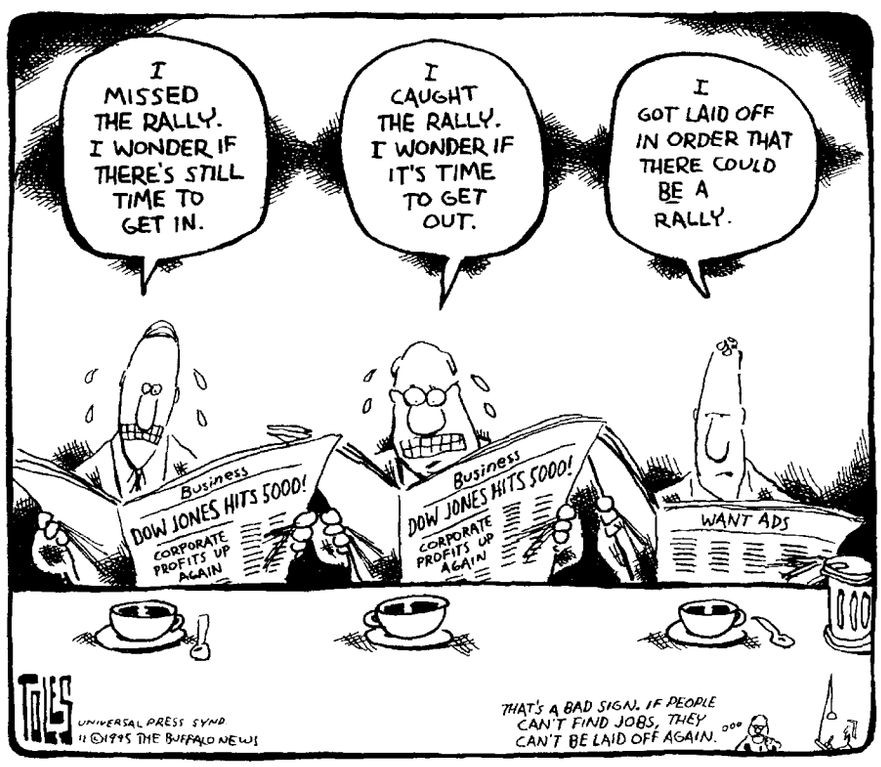
Assad: so long as Israel does not return the Golan Heights the area below the Lebanese border will be a free-fire zone. It's a strange message, particularly as the new Israeli Foreign Minister, Ehud Barak, had just said that Jerusalem was ready to press on with negotiations. It's even stranger, given that Barak's Syrian counterpart seemed to respond in a positive spirit. Still, there's one way to see if the Syrians are genuine: get them to the table, and see if they have a reasonable proposal with them. In the meantime, Peres ought to make good on his implied threat to the Syrians that all the old ground-rules are off. Israel should not allow Assad to make war by proxy. Its air force should not direct its bombs at innocent Lebanon. Syria is the responsible player in this deadly game. It should pay—and pay dearly—whenever its satraps wreak mayhem in Israel.

CAR SICK: So much for the Republicans' bloodless revolution. In its zeal to free the states from federal regulations, the GOP Congress has passed a law repealing the federal speed limit that will likely result in thousands of additional deaths on America's highways each year. Montana, for instance, home of the deadliest stretch of highway in the country, can't wait to become an *autobahn*. At least three other states will adopt a 75 mph limit. This, despite the Department of Transportation's finding that the 1987 increase to a 65 mph limit increased fatalities by 30 percent on affected roads and that higher limits could result in more than 6,000 deaths and $19 billion in accident and insurance costs annually. That's not to mention the additional gallons guzzled at higher speeds (surely not a factor in the leading support of Oklahoma Senator Don Nickles, whose state is an oil-producing titan). And highway policy provides a particularly flimsy arena for GOP states'-rights dogma. Not only is the highway system paid for in large part by federal money, but, unlike other state services such as welfare, it sees daily use by citizens from all parts of the United States. President Clinton's approval of the repeal came in part because of pressure from Western states critical to his re-election. More importantly, however, it was linked to a bill providing billions of dollars in needed highway funding, and he couldn't torpedo the whole thing. Pity.

FEET OF CLAY: The Republicans' immigrant-bashing is getting obsessive. They tried removing student loans, but college presidents revolted and moderates relented. Education, "unlike welfare, is part of the American Dream," sang Florida's Representative Clay Shaw. Well, only sometimes. Shaw's latest ploy is to bar preschool-aged legal immigrants from Head Start, the low-budget, wildly successful tutoring program for poor children. This unrelenting, petty crusade exposes the lie that conservatives pushed during the debate over Proposition 187. It's no longer a legitimate argument about guarding borders and ensuring legal—rather than illegal—immigration. Now even when immigrants do arrive legally, we'll screw them anyway.


I MISSED THE RALLY. I WONDER IF THERE'S STILL TIME TO GET IN.
I CAUGHT THE RALLY. I WONDER IF IT'S TIME TO GET OUT.
I GOT LAID OFF IN ORDER THAT THERE COULD BE A RALLY.
Business
DOW JONES HITS 5000!
CORPORATE PROFITS UP AGAIN
WANT ADS
TOLES
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THAT'S A BAD SIGN. IF PEOPLE CAN'T FIND JOBS, THEY CAN'T BE LAID OFF AGAIN.

WHERE'S THE ACLU WHEN YOU NEED IT?: It would be nice to believe that in the post-cold war world the United Nations would have dropped its tired, old anti-Semitic vitriol. But last week the U.N. denied the request of the World Jewish Congress to address a special meeting on the Palestinian dilemma. At issue is the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Traditionally, the day, November 29, has been used for anti-Zionist harangues. But in the *glasnost* of the Mideast peace, Morris Abram, the head of U.N. Watch, an offshoot of the WJC, tried to address the group. His five-minute statement praised Yitzhak Rabin, Yasir Arafat and Shimon Peres for working toward peace. No matter. The only speakers allowed were traditional Arab promoters: the Arab League, the Islamic Conference and others. The WJC, the oldest Jewish organization with U.N. consultative status, was denied a place at the rostrum. Ah, the more things change... •

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An activist's nightmare.

THE FUR FLIES

By Peter Beinart

Imagine you are an anti-fur activist. It's a sunny day sometime during the mid 1980s, and you're speaking at an outdoor press conference in downtown Toronto. Indignation flows assuredly through your polemic. Sure, grubby businessmen still peddle furs, and the gaudy rich still wear them, but they're an unsympathetic bunch, and the fur industry is in a tailspin. The ambiguity and self-doubt that sap other movements of the Left have left you unscathed.

Unfortunately, you're about to meet Bob Stevenson. Stevenson, who describes himself as "half Cree, half Irish and half crazy," is executive director of Canada's Aboriginal Trappers Federation. He's decided to erect a teepee in the middle of your gathering, and your movement will never be the same.

When it took place a decade ago, Stevenson's teepee stunt represented the stirrings of a phenomenon that is transforming the politics of fur: organized attacks by native Canadians on environmental and animal rights groups. It's a Leftist activist's worst nightmare: a traditionally oppressed group—whose endorsement is vital not only to your external legitimacy but also to your confidence in the justness of your cause—allies with your opponents and skewers you with your own rhetoric. And it is forcing to the surface contradictions lodged deep in the environmental and animal rights movements.

The native backlash began in 1983, when the emerging animal rights movement channeled public outrage over the clubbing of baby seals into a European Economic Community (EEC) ban on the import of seal pelts. Greenpeace was pushing for the ban, and the Inuit (pejoratively called Eskimos), an Arctic seal-hunting people, began lobbying against it in tandem with the Canadian government. The Inuit took Greenpeace staffers to a meeting of elders in the far north, and several staffers came back converts. The result was a bitter fight within the organization as advocates of animal welfare collided with defenders of indigenous survival. In the end, Greenpeace convinced the EEC to exempt indigenous peoples from the ban.

But Greenpeace's compromise proved a disaster. The organization's animal rights wing bolted and formed Lynx, a group that made no exceptions for indigenous peoples. Worse, the Inuit's export market collapsed despite the exception, and between 1980-81 and 1987-88 the number of seal pelts exported annually from Canada's Northwest Territories fell by 97 percent. In the words of Susan Watkins, program consultant for the Inuit Tapirisat, which represents the Inuit people, the ban precipitated a "cultural breakdown." Welfare payments to seal-hunting communities rose from 176 percent of the national average to 445 percent. And rates of family violence, suicide, drug abuse and alcoholism as much as quadrupled. In 1985 a chastened Greenpeace apologized for having supported the ban at all. "You have every right to be very angry with us," spokesman Alan Pickaver told the Inuit. "We will try to make sure this sort of thing does not happen again."

But it is happening again. In 1991, the European Union passed a ban on the import of fur caught in leg-hold traps. The ban, scheduled to take effect this January, was considered a major victory for the European animal rights movement. But native groups, better organized than a decade ago, have launched a blistering attack, arguing that the fur restrictions will do to inland natives what the seal ban did to their coastal cousins. And last week the European Commission caved, delaying the ban for another year.

In a sense, chickens are coming home to roost. Over the years, animal rights and environmental activists have promoted the romantic belief that indigenous peoples instinctively live in harmony with nature. They have used this vision of noble savagery to highlight the artificial and abusive way in which modern society treats the environment. But now native leaders are using this moral high ground to denounce the activists, painting them, just as the enviros often do big business, as alienated, imperialistic urbanites. Says Peter Williamson, the Inuit Taparisat's special projects coordinator, "Their [environmental groups] membership lives in cities. They don't have the intimate relationship which indigenous peoples have with animals and the land." And Watkins vents, "These people are so ignorant, so arrogant, so patronizing, so stupid; they know nothing about aboriginal peoples."

Reluctant to strike back, the environmental groups have labored to maintain the pretense that they are not actually in conflict with indigenous groups. "Over time we have learned that indigenous people do merit an exception," says Greenpeace spokesperson Deborah Rephan. "It's not up to Greenpeace to disrupt the livelihoods of indigenous people.... True subsistence hunting tends not to have a depleting effect on the environment." Indeed, "subsistence" is now Greenpeace's mantra. Under this rubric Greenpeace has remained neutral on the leg-hold trap ban and has opted not to oppose the resumption of whaling by the Makah Indians of the Alaska coast. But the subsistence standard is no panacea. After all, native Canadians are not simply trapping animals for their own consumption, they are also selling them to large auction houses, which in turn sell them to the fashion designers whose wares show up in the showrooms of New York and Milan. The natives in turn use the cash to buy goods produced far away in white, urban society. Most natives wouldn't have it any other way. Bob Stevenson mocks the more-rustic-than-thou position held by the enviros: "We don't mind your

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subsistence hunting; maybe we'll let you buy a washing machine, but heaven forbid a car and definitely don't make any money."

In fact, whatever Greenpeace might want to claim, pure subsistence trapping is a thing of the past. When the Inuit, for instance, gave up their nomadic lifestyle and moved into government-established permanent settlements in the 1950s and 1960s, their barter economy died. The Inuit still kill animals for food and clothing, but they now need cash to pay for rent, heat and other necessities. Furthermore, since they cannot move seasonally to remain near the animals, they must travel longer distances during hunting season and are thus dependent on snowmobiles and other modern equipment. This puts them in blatant conflict with the greens.

And who is the potential winner in all this? You guessed it—the fur industry. Its marriage of convenience with the native organizations has damaged its activist tormentors. And this has contributed to a mild comeback for an industry that had been in steady decline. Fur sales increased by roughly 10 percent in 1992 and again in 1993 and are strong so far this year. Macy's and Nordstrom, which had stopped selling furs, are now back in the business. Part of this revival is due to an improved economy and colder weather. But as the EU's proposed ban has mobilized native groups, anti-fur fervor seems to have quieted. Jack Pearson, vice president and general manager of Maximilian at Bloomingdale's, notes that "Three years ago there would be some protesters once a month on a Saturday. Lately—in the last two seasons—there has been very little." Even Peter Woods of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals admits that "A lot of people are focusing on issues other than fur. The animal rights movement has grown, diversified." Perhaps they're looking for an issue where the bad guys don't live in teepees. •

Africa's giant sinks deeper.

KERNEL OF LIGHT

By Henry Louis Gates Jr.

Joke making rounds among Nigerian political exiles:

Question: "What is the only thing that can save Nigeria?"
Answer: "The British re-colonizing us for five years, then granting us independence all over again." (Then follows laughter so tentative and nervous that you realize this is not much of a joke at all.)

Nigeria contains several of the world's oldest continuous cultures, including the Yoruba, the Ibo and the Hausa, peoples with rich artistic and literary heritages, whose separate greatness has yet to cohere—thirty-five years after independence—into the great nation that the sum of its parts promised in 1960. It came as no surprise that Africa's first Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, hails from the Yoruba, a people so much like the Greeks, with a centuries-old tradition of education and political participation. A people with a literary, religious and mythological tradition as densely metaphorical as it is deeply lyrical, built around the Ifa Oracle, similar to the Delphic Oracle of the Greeks, yet still functioning and regularly consulted today.

Nigeria, with its vast mineral resources, especially oil, its rich topsoil—ten feet deep in places—and a bustling population of 90 million, at least (no one knows for sure), was long thought to be sub-Saharan Africa's natural leader, the black counterweight to illegal, racist, apartheid South Africa. Today, ironically, South Africa is free, led by a democratically elected black philosopher king (if ever there was one). And he has, at long last, summoned the courage to call for drastic military and economic sanctions against the corrupt and decadent military regime of General Sani Abacha. This after Abacha imprisoned billionaire Yoruba Muslim Chief Moshood Abiola, the democratically elected presidential candidate, imprisoned scores of other vocal proponents of democracy, forced 1986 Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka into exile and finally, on November 10, hanged nine Ogoni environmentalists, most notably Ken Saro-Wiwa, a Nobel Prize nominee himself.

Although not the first sub-Saharan African country to win its freedom (that distinction belongs to Ghana), Nigeria's size and natural and cultural resources led many to proclaim its day of independence—October 1, 1960—as the true end of centuries of European colonial domination. But even then, some challenged official optimism. Soyinka—one of this century's great playwrights—submitted a script to an independence day competition. The play, *A Dance of the Forests*, foreshadowed the harrowing events—coups and civil war—that soon would follow. It was, of course, rejected by the official planning committee. Undeterred, Soyinka performed it nonetheless, away from the official celebrations. "You hold a doomed thing in your hand"—one character says near the play's climax. "It is no light matter to reverse the deed that was begun many lives ago."

Soyinka is referring to the legacy of British colonialism, especially as manifested in its Nigerian legatees, "Kaduna mafia," as he euphemistically refers to the Muslim-dominated military-industrial cabal. Divided by rivers into a "Y," thirds dominated respectively by the Yoruba (west), the Hausa and Fulani (north) and the Ibo (east), democracy in Nigeria arrived stillborn, in large part because the British selected the Hausa, whose feudal government most closely mirrored Britain's monarchical system, as their logical heirs. The tensions between the largely Christian south (Yoruba and Ibo)

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and the Muslim north would make continuing neocolonial economic control fairly easy.

The results have been brilliant: Muslim factions have dominated each successive junta and have profited enormously from Nigeria's oil wealth and from allowing their country to be used as a pivotal conduit for drug trafficking. Abacha, who is said to have played central roles in each recent coup, is widely thought to be a billionaire. Not even Chief Abiola's Muslim faith could persuade his military co-religionists to abandon such ready and convenient sources of wealth.

Saro-Wiwa is author of two novels attacking military rule, now a third book detailing his time in detention, several plays and children's books and a widely popular television series, "Basi and Co," which wittily satirized the ruling elite. He received Sweden's $250,000 Right Livelihood Award in 1994, the Goldman Prize earlier this year and was widely considered a leading contender for next year's Nobel Peace Prize. He was also an ethnic Ogoni, 500,000 of whom have the misfortune of living in an oil-rich region whose lands and water multinational companies have heavily polluted. He was hanged, most observers believe, not because of the threat his environmental-based politics posed to the military, but as an example to other Nigerian dissidents, those hell-bent on seeing Abiola released from prison, retiring the army and restoring democracy to Nigeria.

"Ken's destruction," maintains Soyinka, who narrowly escaped imprisonment and a death sentence for treason by fleeing Nigeria just over a year ago, was part of a larger campaign of intimidation and terrorism. "The Ogoni," he concludes, "were just guinea pigs, Abacha's experiment in ethnic cleansing: break their will, destroy their means for earning a living, turn them into animals."

Saro-Wiwa's execution prompted Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth, the retraction of World Bank support for a $100 million loan, the withdrawal of the American and British ambassadors, and the circulation of a "Call to World Conscience" by several Nobel Laureates, including Kenzaburo Oe, Mikhail Gorbachev and, of course, Soyinka. Perhaps most astonishing of all, it elicited a strong protest from the U.S.-based Nigerian People's Forum to a blatantly superficial and outrageously apologetic "fact-finding" report from the all-black National Newspaper Publishers Association praising Abacha's plan to "restore democracy" later in the decade.

But for Soyinka and fellow Nobel Laureates Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Nadine Gordimer, anything short of sanctions akin to those that ended apartheid is insufficient. "Our principal goal must be to vouchsafe the results of Abiola's election on June 12, 1993. Abacha's regime must be totally isolated to send a clear message of the unacceptability of naked brutality and extra-judicial murder. Nigeria must be isolated culturally, economically, diplomatically. It is destabilizing West Africa. There must be a total embargo on trading, an embargo on arms and on oil. Nigeria must be treated like South Africa was treated."

"And, most important of all," Soyinka continues, "the accounts of Abacha and his cronies must be frozen in Germany, Saudi Arabia, France, Britain, the United States and Switzerland."

Soyinka sees enormous cynicism in the failure of other nations, especially in Africa, to respond before Saro-Wiwa's hanging. "It's a pity that we had to pay such a heavy price. The African governments have been willing to compromise with what they think is only a little evil. Even today, in 1995, with all the recent history of vicious little tyrants, these nations fail to realize that when they compromise about restoring democracy, they become unwitting accomplices with the greater evil." Discussing collaboration by former colonial metropole Britain, "which continued to supply Abacha with arms and instruments of crowd repression," his voices rises with anger.

Even Colin Powell, in a moment of unguarded candor during an interview that I conducted with him for the *New Yorker* confirmed Soyinka's opinions about Abacha. He said that Abacha's CIA bio was one of the worst he's ever seen. "And I've seen lots." And he said that corruption was an inherent part of the culture that successive military dictatorships had created in Nigeria.

"At a single stroke," a Powell associate said to me weeks later, he "managed simultaneously to offend a head of state and a nation of 90 million people." And now Powell has decided to publish a letter in the *New Yorker* partially qualifying his remarks.

Powell's office had received, not surprisingly, about a zillion harsh editorials published in the Nigerian press, still one of the feistiest in the world despite the harsh repression and mortal threat it faces every day from Abacha's regime, protesting his characterization of Nigerian culture. Not one mentioned his statements about Abacha's corruption. "They can't refer to the most meaningful part of Colin's remarks," Soyinka added, "if they do, they'll go to jail . . . or worse."

When I asked someone close to Powell why America's most prominent black Republican had been so concerned to temper remarks that had made him a hero to the democracy movement throughout black Africa, he responded with a question.

"Abacha has one photograph hanging in his entire office. Know who it's of?" he asked. "Colin Powell." For Powell to play a role in Nigeria similar to the one he played in the negotiated transition to democracy in Haiti, he needed to qualify his remarks.

Near the end of *A Dance of the Forests*, one of Soyinka's characters asks wistfully, "What manner of night was it? Can you tell us that? In this wilderness, was there a kernel of light?" Given the West's refusal thus far to engage in the systematic sanctions and boycotts that would bring Abacha's demise, perhaps Powell's intervention is that single kernel. Little else can possibly be.

HENRY LOUIS GATES JR. is W.E.B. DuBois Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University.

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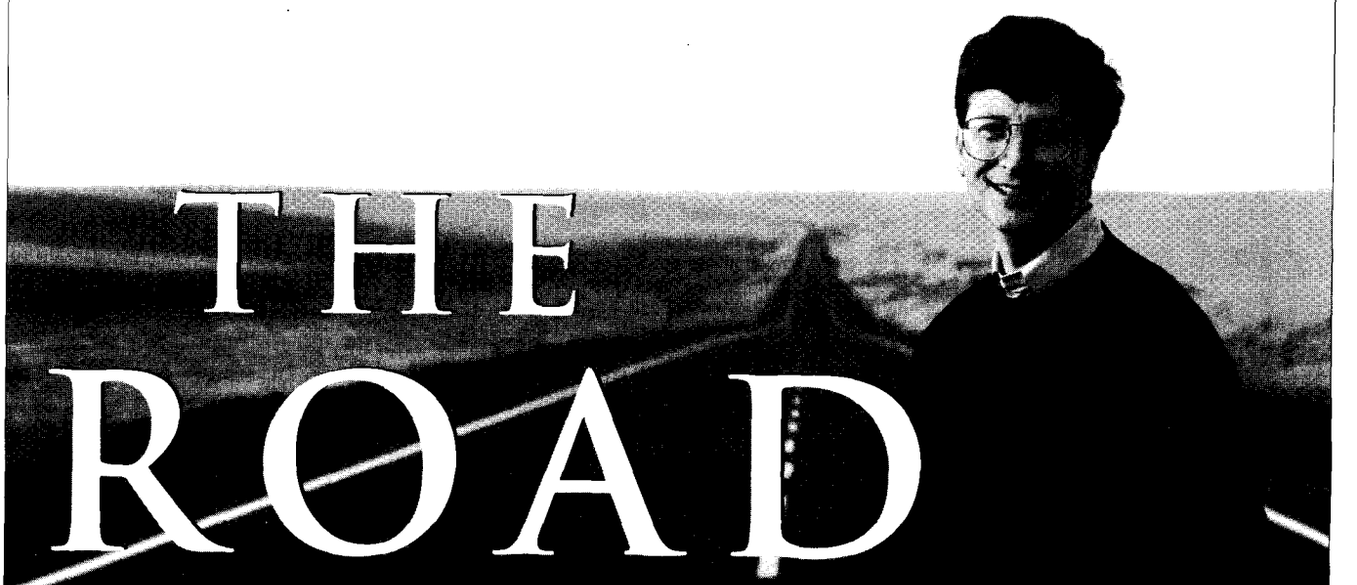
BILL GATES



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The partition that dare not speak its name.

WHEN PEACE MEANS WAR

By John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Van Evera

The Dayton settlement on Bosnia is an unfinished peace, hence a flawed peace. Major issues remain unsettled. The U.S. must send its promised peacekeeping contingent to Bosnia, but, unless it also moves to repair the Dayton accord, these defects will lead to new war, this time with American troops caught in the middle.

Two types of Bosnia peace-schemes—one infeasible, one workable—have long contended. One type offered unitary federal solutions that would maintain Bosnia as a single state where Serbs, Croats and Muslims would learn to live together. However, the triangle of deep hatreds unleashed since Yugoslavia's breakup has long made this solution implausible. Another type of plan proposed partitions dividing Bosnia into several states (usually three), each free to go its own way. The Bosnian Serb state then could (and surely would) join Serbia; the Bosnian Croat state could join Croatia; and a Muslim-majority rump state would remain independent.

Since before the war started in April 1992 the U.S. has favored a federal solution and opposed partition. Now we have belatedly seen the light and produced a partition settlement. This is good news, although the Clinton administration will not admit that its policy has changed. Announcing the accord, President Clinton asserted that "the peace plan agreed to would preserve Bosnia as a single state." Secretary of State Warren Christopher likewise maintained that "the agreement is a victory for all those who believe in a multiethnic democracy in Bosnia." Humpty Dumpty, they suggest, has been put back together again.

These are noble lies. The settlement is a veiled partition but a partition nevertheless. It effectively divides Bosnia into two separate states: a Serb Republic (Republika Srpska) and a Muslim-Croat Federation. They coexist under an impotent central government that barely deserves the name. The reality of partition is starkly evident in the settlement's military provisions. Both Republika Srpska and the Federation are allowed to maintain their own armies, and each army is forbidden from entering the other's territory. This means, in effect, that each regional government can defy the central government's wishes at will. Most important, either can at any time declare and enforce its velvet divorce from the other and its simultaneous remarriage to a neighboring state. The Dayton accord even legitimates the first steps of this divorce-and-remarriage by allowing each entity to establish a "special relationship" with a neighboring state.

Dayton is the fourth Bosnia peace plan produced since 1992 and the culmination of a glacial process of U.S. acclimation to partition. The first was a prewar scheme agreed to in European Community-sponsored talks at Lisbon (February-March 1992). Although the plan spoke of national cantons within a Bosnian state, the federal structure was so weak that the proposal, enthusiastically endorsed by Radovan Karadzic, amounted to partition. Tragically, the Lisbon plan failed when Bosnian leader Alija Izetbegovic changed his mind and scuttled it. Although Warren Zimmermann, the American representative at the talks, now denies it, most reliable reports suggest that Izetbegovic acted with U.S. approval.

Next came the Vance-Owen plan (September 1992-May 1993). It proposed a unitary federal Bosnia divided along ethnic lines into ten semiautonomous cantons that would remain subordinate to a capable central government. The Bosnian Serbs predictably rejected it since it denied them their prime goal, national independence.

Vance-Owen was followed by a European proposal for veiled tripartite partition (July 1993-January 1994). Resembling the Lisbon plan, it envisioned three ethnic republics coexisting in a loose confederation under a powerless central government that could not prevent the inevitable final breakup. Still dreaming of a united Bosnia under their leadership, and again encouraged by the U.S., the Muslims rejected it in early 1994.

At this point the U.S. had torpedoed two peace plans while endorsing none. Exasperated, the Europeans demanded that the U.S. propose and support solutions of its own. This led to the so-called Contact Group plan of April 1994, which reached fruition at Dayton. It stemmed from two developments between February and April 1994. First, the Americans pushed the Croats and Muslims, then engaged in a bloody war, to stop fighting and form a federation. Second, the United

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States, Britain, France, Russia and Germany formed the five-power Contact Group, which then proposed a veiled bipartite partition of Bosnia between the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Serbs. It envisioned a 51-49 territorial division of Bosnia, with 51 percent allotted to the Muslim-Croat Federation and 49 percent to Republika Srpska. The Serbs would be allowed to remain outside the Federation and to run their own republic. At the time, Clinton administration officials hinted that the U.S. might tolerate secession by the Bosnian Serbs. The basic outline of the bipartite partition agreed to in Dayton was in place, although Serb acceptance had to await the sobering impact of battlefield defeats in the summer of 1995.

The Dayton accord embodies America's belated embrace of partition, but it does not carry partition's logic to its necessary conclusion, and therein lies its weakness. The Dayton agreement posits bipartite partition, but there are three competing parties in Bosnia. A plan that denies this reality suffers from the same comforting delusions that have prevented the West from securing a Bosnian peace for the past three years.

The main problem is that the Croatian-Muslim Federation is untenable. Like the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Croats want out of Bosnia. They accepted the Muslim-Croat Federation as an expedient, but they chafe at membership in it, and they will surely move to destroy it someday soon. The U.S. should have anticipated this development by forging agreement on the partition of the Federation into Croat and Muslim states at Dayton. Instead, their inevitable divorce may well occur by war.

All evidence points to fierce Bosnian Croat resistance to political union with the Bosnian Muslims. The mayor of a Bosnian Croat town near Mostar recently warned that "if there were a referendum, the people would vote not 90 percent but 99 percent, not to be part of the Federation." Simple demographics fuel this Croat hostility. Muslims outnumber the Bosnian Croats by more than two to one and would, therefore, dominate Federation politics. This the highly nationalistic Croats will never accept. Instead they will demand their own state or insist on joining a Greater Croatia.

Croat-Muslim relations were badly damaged by the brutal war they fought between April 1993 and February 1994. The U.S.-brokered peace that ended it is little more than a truce. Relations between the two sides remain venomous. Even as they struggled together against the Serbs, Muslim and Croat forces twice fell to fighting each other in southwestern Bosnia last summer. Croat-Muslim relations in Mostar tell the same story. That city was devastated by the Croat-Muslim war and left divided, with the Croatians controlling the western half and the Muslims ruling in the east. The European Community then invested over $200 million to rebuild and reunify Mostar. Yet the city remains divided, with no prospect of reconciliation in sight.

The Bosnian Croats can destroy the Federation at will. Their political organization, the Republic of Herzog-Bosna, already boasts all the trappings of a state. It has its own 50,000-man army. It delivers the mail, runs the schools and collects taxes. Most important, like the Republika Srpska, it has a powerful ally next door in the Republic of Croatia. It is already closely linked to its mother state: Bosnian Croats carry Croatian passports, use Croatian currency and Croatian license plates, route their telephone calls through Croatia and vote in Croatian elections, as they did in Croatia's October 29, 1995, parliamentary elections.

Moreover, Croatia is a willing ally and partner in the Federation's destruction. Croatia's strongman, President Franjo Tudjman, has shown undisguised contempt for the Bosnian Muslims. Even as he paraded with Richard Holbrooke in Dayton, he was promoting a Croatian general, Tihomir Blaskic, charged recently by the international war crimes tribunal with anti-Muslim crimes against humanity. The tribunal alleged that during the 1993-1994 Muslim-Croat war Blaskic oversaw the systematic killing or expulsion of "almost the entire Muslim civilian population in the Lasva valley" in cen-

The Dayton Agreement

MAP BY JIM HOLLOWAY FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

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tral Bosnia—deeds that Tudjman apparently felt were no bar to advancement. Tudjman has also spoken openly of seizing Croatia's share of Bosnia and even of dividing it in two with Serbia.

If the Bosnian Croats oppose the Federation, why did they join it in the first place? In early 1994 the United States offered Tudjman blandishments that he could not refuse. In particular, the U.S. promised to help him regain the large chunks of Croatian territory (about one-third of that country) then controlled by rebel Croatian Serbs. Toward that end, the United States helped Croatia build a powerful army by turning a blind eye to weaponry flowing into Croatia in clear violation of the U.N. arms embargo. The United States also sent a team of retired U.S. army generals to Croatia to teach tactics and strategy to Croatia's new army. Other aid, still concealed, was probably sent as well.

The results of American assistance have been spectacular. In May of this year, the Croatian army recaptured Western Slavonia in two days. In August the entire Krajina region, a Serb-populated Croatian territory that easily threw off Croat rule in 1991, was reconquered in four days. And last month, faced with this Croat military juggernaut, Serbia's President Slobodan Milosevic agreed to give up Eastern Slavonia without a fight and transfer it back to Croatia in one to two years.

Thus the Muslim-Croat Federation paid handsome short-term dividends for the Croats. But Tudjman still has no long-term interest in making the Federation work. In fact, his main inducement to cooperate will vanish with his recovery of Eastern Slavonia, which is the last Croatian area still in Serb hands. Tudjman tipped his hand last May when he told a British parliamentarian that he envisioned a Bosnia eventually divided and conquered by Croatia and Serbia, a scheme he illustrated with a now-notorious sketch on a menu. His remarks echoed earlier reports that he and Milosevic had agreed to carve up Bosnia between them in March 1991, the same year in which the Croat leader told then U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren Zimmermann that "Bosnia has never had any real existence," and "should be divided between Serbia and Croatia."

In short, the Muslim-Croat Federation is a virtual dead letter. When it collapses, there is bound to be renewed fighting between Croats and Muslims over disputed territory unless their divorce is carefully agreed to in advance. Renewed Croat-Muslim fighting could in turn cause a wider unraveling of the Dayton accord by triggering renewed Serb-Muslim and Serb-Croat fighting.

The Bosnian Serbs remain especially bitter about three aspects of the Dayton accord: its award of Sarajevo and Gorazde to the Federation and the narrow width of the Posavina Corridor, the Serbs' territorial connector in northern Bosnia. The Belgrade Serbs would also like to renege on their promise to return Eastern Slavonia to Croatia and to claim it for Serbia instead. Fighting between Croats and Muslims would create a golden opportunity for Serbs to gain these goals by force while Muslim and Croat forces tie each other down. And if the Serbs jump through this window of opportunity we will be back where we began, with a three-way war.

Alternately, renewed Croat-Muslim fighting could also end with a Serb-Croat conquest of Muslim lands and a two-way division of Bosnia between Belgrade and Zagreb, following the lines of their rumored 1991 agreement. Such an outcome would be quieter in the short run but would surely lead to guerrilla war, massive new flows of refugees and the cruel denial of Muslim national freedom.

Some 60,000 NATO and non-NATO troops are slated for deployment to implement the Dayton plan shortly after its signing in Paris later this month. The United States will provide 20,000 soldiers for the implementation force, or IFOR, as it is called. These forces are assigned to patrol the roughly 550-mile border between the Federation and the Republika Srpska, to separate the two sides' forces and to oversee their deployment back to temporary barracks away from the front lines.

U.S. forces will face two problems. First, there is no secure peace in Bosnia for the IFOR peacekeepers to keep. Peacekeepers can bolster a stable peace accord, but they do little good before such an accord is in place. And because the Dayton agreement is incomplete, it may not prove stable. A worst-case scenario, and not an unlikely one, is that the shooting will start while IFOR is still deployed in Bosnia, and American soldiers will be caught in the crossfire, perhaps in the midst of a presidential campaign. The Clinton administration might then be forced to withdraw U.S. forces ignominiously, as it did after casualties in Somalia sparked an outcry at home. Even if IFOR is able to keep a lid on the fighting while it is deployed in Bosnia, the American effort will nevertheless be wasted if the fighting resumes later, as it almost certainly will unless the Croat-Muslim conflict is resolved.

The second problem is that U.S. forces will have two missions in Bosnia that work at cross-purposes: peacekeeping and arming the Muslims. The impact of the U.N. arms embargo has fallen unevenly on the three belligerents, hitting the Bosnian Muslims hardest. Today they are outgunned by both the Croats and the Serbs and cannot defend themselves. Thus, one reason IFOR is needed is to protect the Muslims from the Croats and the Serbs while the peace plan is implemented. The need to establish security for the Muslims will continue even after the agreement is implemented. Otherwise the Muslims' weakness will be a standing invitation to both the Croats and Serbs to return to war once IFOR leaves. Hence the U.S. will have to bolster the Bosnian Muslim army before it can leave Bosnia. The Muslim army should be strengthened to a point where it has a fair chance of defending successfully against a Croat or Serb attack. If the U.S. leaves without creating such a power balance it will leave behind a powder keg.

Arming the Muslims, however, clashes with the neu-

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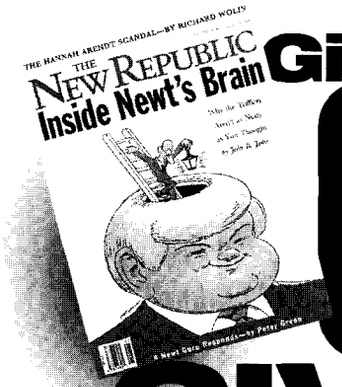

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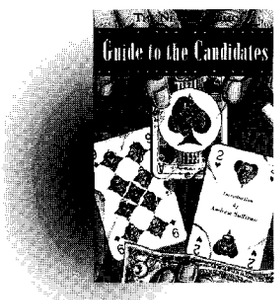

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Beirut to Bosnia

If the U.S. contributes 20,000 troops, as planned, to a 60,000-strong NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia, the result will be the latest example of what the Pentagon knows by the acronym OOTW: Operations Other Than War. Its success may depend on how well the Clinton administration has learned the lessons of previous attempts at OOTW: peacekeeping, peace-making and nation-building in Lebanon, Somalia and Haiti. In these three cases, the same pattern has been repeated: early success in achieving narrowly defined goals followed by catastrophe and withdrawal when "mission creep" led to ambitious attempts at reconstructing disordered states and societies.

The terrorist bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon on October 23, 1983, which killed 241 American soldiers, has overshadowed the fact that the initial intervention of the U.S. in Lebanon was a success. The purpose of that first mission—in which the U.S. joined France and Italy in a multinational force—was to impose peace among the warring factions in Lebanon in the aftermath of Israel's June 1982 invasion long enough to permit the troops from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to be evacuated. By early September 1982, this operation had been accomplished. On September 16, however, six days after the U.S. Marines had returned to their ships, Lebanese Christian militiamen began a three-day slaughter of 800 Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

President Reagan then sent 1,200 marines back into Lebanon in late September 1982. Doing so was a disastrous mistake. The first intervention had followed a strict timetable (the administration promised the Marines would be withdrawn after thirty days), and the U.S., along with its allies, had not taken sides with one or another of the warring parties. The new mission in Lebanon was bound by neither of these constraints. There was no date for a pullout. Even worse, the Reagan administration committed the U.S. to the task of strengthening the government of President Amin Gemayel—a government that existed more in theory than in reality. According to Reagan, on May 17, 1983, the U.S. was now in Lebanon "to help the new government of Lebanon maintain order until it can organize its military and its police and assume control of its borders and its own internal security." As a result of mission creep, the U.S. committed itself to supporting a feeble government and joining as a combatant in the Lebanese civil war—ambitious tasks without the support of the American public. In February 1984, three months after the bombing of the Beirut Marine barracks, the U.S. began its ignominious pullout.

In December 1992, President Bush set in motion another misadventure in OOTW, this time in Somalia. The Clinton administration expanded a relatively successful humanitarian relief operation into a more ambitious nation-building effort—the familiar pattern of initial success in a strictly defined task followed by mission creep and disaster. In its attempt to help rebuild a Somali government, the Clinton administration abandoned neutrality and took sides in the struggle among rival Somali factions. After two dozen U.N. peacekeepers from Pakistan were killed by supporters of Mohammed Farah Aidid, the U.S. launched a manhunt for General Aidid, now identified as an evil "warlord." In a firefight between U.S. forces and Aidid's troops in October 1993, seventy-eight American soldiers were wounded and eighteen killed; the body of one was dragged triumphantly through the streets of Mogadishu, before a world watching on CNN. Once again, the U.S. had failed to force the reassembly of a broken society at gunpoint; once again, U.S. troops engaged in a humiliating retreat.

Compared to the debacles in Lebanon and Somalia, the U.S. intervention in Haiti at first appeared to be a success. Faced with the prospect of war with the United States, the military dictatorship of General Raoul Cedras abdicated and President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was restored to power in September 1994. The original all-U.S. contingent of 20,000 peacekeeping troops has been replaced by a U.N. peacekeeping force of 6,900 troops, including 2,300 American soldiers. Haiti appeared to be a model of peacekeeping that worked.

In the last month, however, the apparently successful settlement has begun to crumble. The United States announced that it would withhold a fraction of its aid to Haiti to punish the Aristide government for not moving more rapidly to privatize government-controlled companies. Then, on November 7, Jean-Hubert Feuille, a cousin and close political ally of Aristide, was murdered by gunmen. At Feuille's funeral on November 11, Aristide uttered a fiery speech calling on supporters to disarm his enemies. The speech was followed by acts of arson, looting and murder of political opponents by some of Aristide's followers. Even worse, on Friday, November 24, Aristide alarmed the U.S. by raising the possibility that he would stay in power for three more years (he had promised to leave office on February 7 after a free election on December 17 in which he would not be a candidate). Whether an orderly and democratic transition will take place as planned, permitting the exit of U.S. along with U.N. troops from Haiti, remains to be seen.

The lessons of these adventures in OOTW for the U.S. in Bosnia are clear. The U.S. and its allies might succeed, as long as success is defined in the narrowest possible terms—the separation of hostile forces by neutral peacekeepers. If the U.S. tries to provide the muscle for a powerless central government with a complicated multiethnic constitution and little legitimacy among rival populations (as in Lebanon) or to take sides with one group rather than another in an attempt at "nation-building" by outsiders (as in Somalia), the NATO effort in Bosnia is likely to end in failure and humiliation. The U.S. must choose between enforcing a de facto partition of the defunct Bosnian state and a more ambitious attempt to reconstruct a federal Bosnia under a new central government with a complex and probably unworkable constitution.

Even a modest and successful peacekeeping effort in the Balkans may be prolonged indefinitely. The situation in Cyprus offers another striking parallel: just as Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs are likely to seek annexation of their fragments of Bosnia by Croatia and Serbia, respectively, so Greek Cypriots have sought to join Greece, while Turkey has occupied and governed the Turkish section of the island. If the parallel holds in other respects, NATO forces, if sent into Bosnia, will not be disengaged soon. The U.N. peacekeeping force has been keeping Greek and Turkish Cypriots apart since March 1964.

MICHAEL LIND

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tral stance that peacekeeping requires. Peacekeepers invite attack unless they act as honest brokers, showing no favoritism toward any faction. If the Americans are perceived as taking sides, which is sure to happen once we start arming and training the Muslim army, the Serbs and Croats are bound to consider the Americans as adversaries. U.S. peacekeepers patrolling the long Federation-Republika Srpska border will be inviting and easy targets for terrorist retribution.

The U.S. never should have signed the Dayton agreement. It should, rather, have forged a tripartite partition of Bosnia, in expectation that the Croatian and Serbian republics would join a Greater Croatia and Greater Serbia, respectively. In an alternative—and better—agreement, the Muslim state would be given a viable national territory. Its borders would not be unduly long, would not include Muslim enclaves isolated in Serb or Croat territory, would be militarily defensible and would provide access to the sea. The Muslims would be promptly armed so that they could defend themselves without having to rely on American or NATO ground forces but not given enough offensive capability to lead them to try to take lost territory. While this arming went on, the Muslim state would be secured by a NATO promise to use massive NATO (largely U.S.) air power to assist Muslim forces if the need were to arise. Under such a scenario, the European NATO states and the U.S. would pursue a division of labor: Europe would assume all peacekeeping duties while the U.S. concentrated on arming and training the Muslim forces and on maintaining a ready sword in the air. No U.S. peacekeepers would go to Bosnia. Finally, a transfer of populations caught behind new national borders would be organized and subsidized by the major powers.

Important elements of this ideal strategy are no longer possible because the Clinton administration has committed the U.S. to the Dayton program—with its incomplete partition, its cross-purposes and its lack of provisions for population transfer. But the U.S. cannot now abandon Dayton without cutting an absurd appearance. So Dayton must go forward.

To have any chance of success, however, the Dayton plan must at least be repaired. In the first place, the partition of the Muslim-Croat Federation should be promptly arranged. The U.S. should oversee its details and apply whatever coercion the parties require. The U.S. now seems ready to manage the Serbian exit from Bosnia but remains strangely unaware that the Muslims and the Croats will inevitably part ways as well. Instead, the U.S. should develop a plan for managing the breakup of the doomed Muslim-Croat Federation with a minimum of bloodshed.

The U.S. should also accept the need to organize some further transfer of populations. The Dayton accord includes surreal language referring to the return of refugees to their homes, implying that Bosnia now might somehow return to the status quo ante. This would surely be desirable from a humanitarian and moral perspective. However, save for a handful of special cases, it is not going to happen. Bosnia has witnessed mass murder and other unthinkable horrors. Rivers of blood have flowed. All three parties are uncontrite and deeply bitter. There can be no restoration of integrated life until a profound reconciliation takes place. This is decades away. Hence, most of the ethnic cleansing that occurred in this war is going to stand for now. In fact, even more transfers are needed. For example, many of Sarajevo's Serbs will want to leave once that city comes under full Muslim control. Most Serbs will also flee Eastern Slavonia if Milosevic turns it over to the Croats. The U.S. should accept these sad facts and develop plans to ease the hardship that these migrations inflict on the displaced.

Finally, the United States should press forward with arming the Bosnian Muslims. The Serbs and Croats should be urged to publicly accept this arming program, to give U.S. peacekeepers exposed in Bosnia a measure of political cover. The U.S. goal should be to give the Muslims a strong self-defense capability, adequate to deter new Croat or Serb aggression. Even if Serb and Croat leaders publicly accepted U.S. military aid to Bosnia, however, this part of the accord could compromise U.S. neutrality, making peacekeeping efforts much harder.

If, however, the Dayton agreement falls apart—because, for instance, Bosnian Serbs sabotage it—the U.S. will not be sent back to square one, because the Clinton administration will have finally begun to do what it should have done long ago: arm the Bosnian Muslims. If the NATO force is not, in the end, sent, or is soon withdrawn, the U.S. would not face the present contradiction between neutral peacekeeping and armed support for one side. It could then try, without Dayton's restrictions, to build up a Bosnian state capable of defending itself. Furthermore, with the deal having fallen through, European opposition to arming the Bosnian Muslims would be weakened. Even if Dayton fails, therefore, good may come of it.

Peacemaking in Bosnia has been slow and difficult because the U.S. shrank from partition. It shrank from partition because partition is ugly. But in Bosnia, sadly, it is also the only feasible scheme for peace. This error reflects a general American tendency to underestimate the power and intractability of nationalism; it reflects, too, a dogmatic American faith that other multiethnic societies can harmonize themselves, that ethnic groups elsewhere can learn to live together as America's immigrants have. This faith finds expression in reflexive U.S. efforts to keep together all states that face communal civil wars, lately including Iraq, the USSR and Yugoslavia.

But U.S. policymakers must be willing at times to decide that some states cannot be sustained and should instead be disassembled. Only if we accept this reality honestly and promptly will we have a reasonable chance of managing their disassembly and keeping it relatively peaceful. Partition should remain a last resort, but, regrettably, we still live in a world where it is sometimes necessary. •

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VANITY BLAIR

By Andrew Marr

He's been called Bill Clinton's smarter younger brother. The best Tory tacticians are terrified of him. At lunch-tables round Westminster, the prime minister's allies whisper about the looming electoral slaughter. As business leaders defect and opinion polls give Labour a stratospheric lead, there is now a fixed assumption in Britain that the next prime minister will be Tony Blair.

A young-looking 43, he is a slim but strongly built man whose fast smile and self-deprecating patter convey the impression of relentless, perpetual movement. Talk slowly, or make a point twice, and an impatient glaze comes into his eyes. He is restlessness in a designer suit. But when I talked to him recently in his North London home—a plush and slightly child-scarred Victorian terraced house—Blair was off duty, tousled and denim'd. He has always been a cheery rock-freak, a passionate father and a weekend slob. And he has always been surprising.

His current surprise is his enthusiasm for the new Francis Fukuyama offering, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity.* It's unexpected because of the disdain on the left for Fukuyama's earlier book, marked down for its enthusiasm for Nietzsche and free-market hubris. But Blair sees in the second book further evidence of a worldwide rethinking of the need for strong social structures to underpin economic success.

Remaking a "stakeholder society" in which revived local government, more investment in education and support for the institutions of civil society give Britons a stronger sense of self-confidence is Blair's project. It distinguishes him from the small-state or neoliberal right, to which Newt Gingrich's name is attached in Britain, too. "The key theme is the One Nation theme [a soft-Tory slogan appropriated by Blair but first minted by Benjamin Disraeli]. Even people like Fukuyama are having to accept that without a strong society in which everyone has a stake and everyone has a responsibility to others, there can be no lasting prosperity."

Talking to Blair you get a strong sense that he feels part of a wider Western conversation about the future of progressive politics. The Labour leader is a keen follower of Washington politics and says "that both the modernizers in the Labour Party and in the Democrats have reached the same conclusions. First, that our political party has to have a broad, mainstream base, not be the Amalgamated Union of Pressure Groups, with every interest group under the sun demanding policies. And second, that we have to reconnect our parties with our aspirational voters, those that were doing OK but wanted to do better, and those who were doing well but who wanted to do better still, as well as those left behind."

Blair's middle-class empathy has inevitably tainted him with the image of a closet conservative—"Tory Blair," as the left has tagged him. His background gives this credence. Blair is the son of a right-wing barrister who went to the upper-crust Scottish private school Fettes before graduating to Oxford and then a coveted training as a barrister in London. To put this in old left-speak; if he looks and sounds like a member of the ruling class that's because he is.

In fact, each of these facts about Blair's background is enough of a half-truth to be misleading. His father, Leo, was described by his son, with typical candor, as "a gut conservative.... He was keen on the Thatcher revolution." But Leo was also an adopted child, the son of traveling actors (giving Blair an interesting link with John Major, whose parents were also actors), who was taken in by a Glasgow shipyard worker's family and was briefly a Young Communist. More to the point, he was struck down by a stroke when Tony was 10, and the family suffered great insecurity for years afterwards, while Leo was unable to work. Hospitals and money worries loomed large in the future Labour leader's childhood. Tony went to Fettes on a scholarship. There he was a notorious rebel. At Oxford he wanted to be a rock star; and when he got a clerkship with a leading barrister, it was Derry Irvine, a keen Labour supporter who's now tipped as a future Lord Chancellor if Labour wins.

To understand Blair's political character, we learn more from three key crises in recent years than from his earlier background. They are: his selection for his district, which got him into Parliament in 1983; his grab for the Labour leadership after the sudden death of the previous leader, John Smith, in June and July of 1994; and his rush to modernize the party after that, drama-

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Creating "Monsters"

(The author of this week's guest column is Gary L. Crum, a retired teacher who worked mostly with disruptive and hard-to-educate students for over 25 years. The column first appeared in the Eugene, Oregon, Register-Guard on October 5, 1995).

Civilization is based on the assumption that individuals are responsible for their actions.

Most public school teachers would agree, classrooms are often not the safe, calm, productive workplaces they need to be. It's time we all acknowledge this fact and do something about it. I say "we all" because it will take a concerted, cooperative effort from all parties in education: students, teachers, administrators, school boards, parents, and communities to change what has become a pervasive negative climate in the public schools.

Next, we need to adjust our attitude toward nonproductive and disruptive students. Most of us who get involved in education do so because we're caring people. Unfortunately, that caring all too frequently translates into tolerance on the part of teachers, counselors, administrators, and school boards as we deal with dysfunctional students.

One of the key assumptions upon which civilization is based is that individuals are responsible for their actions. If we as educators or parents absolve students of this responsibility, we create "monsters." Our interactions with students must consistently tell them that there are limits to acceptable behavior, and that behavior outside those limits will result in predictable and consistent negative consequences.

We should always empathize with students who have experienced abusive childhoods, etc.; schools and other social agencies must provide counseling to address such issues. But we must, at the same time, hold those students responsible for their behavior. If we don't, we're doing a disservice to all the students in the classroom, and especially a disservice to that dysfunctional student.

Tolerating unacceptable behavior tells all the students one of two things: The limits really don't count, so the behavior is actually acceptable, or the particular student is so "disturbed" that the rest of us can't expect him or her to behave acceptably. The first message leads to a total breakdown of any classroom structure, and the second has a devastating impact on any efforts to help the dysfunctional student change his or her self-image and behavior.

If we want "normal" behavior, we must define what we consider "normal," publicize that definition, believe all students are capable of behaving within that definition, expect acceptable behavior, and consistently punish behavior falling outside that definition. If we do anything else, (pardon the cliché) we become part of the problem instead of part of the solution.

I have used the terms "consequence," "negative consequence," and "punish." Yes, these are negative terms in that they are reactions to unacceptable behavior. On the other hand, they are positive in that they are efforts to extinguish unacceptable behavior and encourage acceptable behavior.

Our second needed attitude adjustment is simple: It's time we quit feeling guilty about providing negative consequences for unacceptable behavior.

It's really quite simple: Develop your boundaries or rules and the consequences for breaking those rules; be sure the students are aware of both; consistently enforce the rules; and provide the consequences. Most dysfunctional students come from backgrounds where rules were ambiguous or nonexistent, and enforcement was inconsistent or arbitrary. The last thing they need is for schools to continue in that same fashion.

It is important to mention that enforcing rules and providing negative consequences for unacceptable behavior is inconvenient for all parties. Of course it's inconvenient for the student—quite frankly, it's supposed to be! But it's also inconvenient for the teacher who may stay after school with a student instead of grading papers or planning lessons. It's inconvenient for the administrator who may become involved in the process, and for the parent who may have to pick up the student who stayed after school and missed the regular bus service, or who has to meet with a teacher, counselor or vice principal regarding his or her student's behavior.

But, let's all remember, one of our jobs as educators or parents is to help civilize young people. It's a difficult and important job, perhaps the most difficult and important job in teaching or in family life.

Our next attitude adjustment, then, is to accept that discipline is important not only because it allows the academics to progress but as an end in itself. The out-of-control student usually becomes an out-of-control adult; the student who constantly disrupts the classroom becomes the adult who disrupts society. School affords the best opportunity to intervene in that negative progression; as caring educators and parents, let's not squander that opportunity.

Obviously, it's the responsibility of individual districts and schools to review their disciplinary procedures and make the changes that may be necessary to develop systems that work. There would be no better way to invest the time.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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tized by his imposition of a new statement of Labour's aims and values earlier this year.

Blair won his seat with a mix of luck, cheek and dissimulation. He had already cut his teeth fighting a hopeless off-year election the year before. As a sharp, fresh-faced 29-year-old lawyer, he was considered an attractive candidate, but at the height of the Falklands War he was badly defeated, taking just 10 percent of the vote and coming third behind the rival Liberal Party. Even so, Blair's campaigning vigor had won him a routine letter of support from the then Labour leader Michael Foot. That proved a vital piece of ammunition when, just a few weeks before the 1983 general election, Blair packed a bag and hurried north to the new safe Labour seat of Sedgefield, old coalmining country near Durham. The nomination was considered to have been "carved up" already by trade union and left-wing networks. But Blair, an outsider, found some party workers to support him and scurried round knocking on doors relentlessly.

Sedgefield was—and is—Labour. But its closely knit communities and villages have never been receptive to the kind of militant leftism that was then sweeping the Labour Party and threatening to sweep it out of mainstream British politics forever. Blair was a fully committed member of the anti-leftist side. His new friends in the constituency used this against his left-wing opponent and then exploited the endorsement from Michael Foot for all it was worth. At a packed and dramatic meeting, Blair did something very rare in the Labour Party. He came from nowhere to win the nomination and a seat in the Commons for life.

The second political crisis involved friendship. He joined the parliamentary Labour Party after the 1983 general election at one of the lowest points in its postwar history. It had crashed to 209 seats and was facing a triumphant Conservative majority of 144. Blair, the youngest Labour MP, gravitated to the moderate reformers who would later be known as Kinnockites, after the new Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, who began Labour's long, slow crawl back to the center of British politics.

Throughout the period, Blair shared a cramped and insanitary Westminster office with another new boy, the Scottish Labour MP Gordon Brown, who had been widely tipped as a future party leader. Brown knew more about the Labour Party than Blair. He was better-read—while Blair had been marrying, enjoying family life and lawyering, Brown was devouring textbooks and spending his holidays in Washington's Library of Congress. Brown took Blair under his wing and Kinnock promoted them both. Peter Mandelson, Kinnock's brilliant spin-doctor, taught both of them the art of soundbite politics. Within a few years they had become the twin golden boys of Kinnock's reformed Labour Party. Night after night, week after week, year after year, they pursued a long conversation about the future of leftist politics. Intellectually, they almost fused. Politically, their intense friendship formed the core of the modernizing Labour camp. And, as they looked to the future, the stated assumption was that Brown, as the senior partner of the two, would one day be the candidate for the leadership of the party. And that Blair would support him.

After Kinnock lost the 1987 and 1992 elections, John Smith, a lovely, heavyweight Scottish lawyer with a formidable appetite for whiskey and social reform, became leader. By the time he dropped dead with his second heart attack, in 1994, Blair had begun to edge ahead of Brown as potential leadership material. Indeed, in the interim, something had happened to Gordon Brown. He had been overcoached in soundbite politics. His obsessive interest in appearing on every radio and television show had become something of a joke. The job of trying to fashion a leftish economic policy that didn't require higher taxes or protectionism took its toll. He became the grinch that stole the left's reflationary Christmas.

Blair, by contrast, had enjoyed a series of political successes. He had impressed the Commons by his handling of the opposition to electricity privatization. He had impressed Kinnock by deftly bringing the trade unions round to accepting a change in party policy that ended the "closed shop," by which certain jobs carried the obligation of union membership. And he had impressed the country with the savagery of his attack on the Conservatives' record on law and order. Blair neatly sidestepped the old division, under which the left agonized about social factors while the Tories demanded retribution. He attacked young thugs and the failure of government policy with equal venom.

The shift seemed more genuine than Clinton's crime-bashing because Blair had long been a traditional moralist. "Tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime," was the Blair soundbite, and it did what soundbites hardly ever do. It bit. For the first time, it was the Conservatives who were hobbling in retreat over law and order. All this meant that, by the time the shock of John Smith's death reverberated through the Labour movement, Blair had decided to succeed him, whatever Brown decided to do. He had the looks, the accent, the reputation to woo the English middle classes, who had deserted Labour for over a decade. Brown didn't. So Blair decided that destiny trumped friendship. The party agreed. The message for Brown was brutal: in the interests of the party and its modernizers, he should stand aside. Or Blair would beat him anyway.

For days, Brown was in agony. Blair was concerned, even solicitous. But he was implacable. At a now-famous dinner for two at Granita, one of North London's trendier eateries, Brown conceded to Blair. He had decided that to fight his friend would involve calling down "dark and awful forces"—accusations that would divide the modernizers and damage the party. A few weeks later, Blair was elected leader with 57 percent of the total vote, against 24 percent for his nearest, leftist rival.

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If Blair's first moment of truth had occurred in the cottages and village halls of a Northern constituency and his second over rocket salad in North London, his third occurred fully in the public gaze, at party conferences in 1994 and 1995. Part four of Clause IV of the 1918 Labour Party constitution had, for generations, been regarded as the party's soul. It was drafted by a middle-class intellectual and a trade union leader during the Russian Revolution, and it committed the Labour Party "to secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of distribution, production and exchange.... "

Those are fine, biblical cadences; but they committed Labour to the awkward goal of communist equality. At various times Labour leaders had made tentative attempts to revise the words but had drawn back when faced by the ire of party activists who found commitment to socialism on paper a perfectly acceptable alternative to achieving it in practice. Britain is, after all, a nation of antiquarians. But Blair decided to kill off the 1918 commitment and replace it with a modern statement of social-democratic aims. This was an argument he didn't need to have; not many voters had ever heard of Clause IV, never mind being put off by it. But Blair believed it represented a wider dishonesty, the gap between what his party claimed it stood for and what it really stood for.

TONY BLAIR BY JOHN SPRINGS FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

This goal was revealed in the final passage of Blair's 1994 conference speech. The relevant pages were held back as the rest of the text was circulated to journalists. When the new leader explained what he intended, many of those in the huge hall didn't grasp what was happening. But within minutes Labour's hard-line socialists were furiously denouncing him. For the next six months, a battle took place throughout the party as new wording that explicitly recognized the importance of market economics and competition was slowly digested. Then, in the same ornate Westminster Methodist hall where the original 1918 wording had been voted through, Labour voted earlier this year to approve the new wording by 65 percent. Except, by now, hardly anyone was describing the party as Labour. Blair's preferred party label, New Labour, was being used, proudly or derisively, unthinkingly or satirically, by almost everyone.

The three acts that have done most to shape Blair's political career tell us a lot about Britain's likely next prime minister. He is a ruthless, anti-leftist opportunist who can move at lightning speed: the most formidable attacking politician Labour has had in a generation. But what, to ask a Clintonian question, does he actually believe? Sprawled on a sofa in his jeans, Blair makes no bones about the death of the old left: "There's a sense in which politics has definitively changed, because the era of the great ideology which imposes a solution to every problem in the world has gone. The right has been driven to accept the need for social provision, and the left has been driven to accept the need for a market economy which is not prey to special interest groups of every kind. But the value system that influences policy choices ... is very different [between the parties] and that can lead to different policy outcomes. It's the left, for instance, which is tackling problems of education, welfare-to-work and technological change, far better than the right."

Well, maybe. But whose value systems? Blair has distinguished himself on the left by his unequivocal use of traditional moral language. And unlike Clinton, he carries credibility. Blair is a devout Christian, which is far rarer in Britain than in the United States. He sent his eldest child to a disciplinarian and independent Roman Catholic school. At this year's Labour conference, Blair described the coming general election as nothing less than "a battle for the soul of our nation." He said his generation had enjoyed a thousand material advantages over any previous one but suffered "a depth of insecurity and spiritual doubt they never knew ... frightened for our future and unsure of our soul." He wanted, he said, to make Britain a young country again, a "country reborn." This is the language of evangelism and nearly unheard of in the pragmatic, understated atmosphere of Westminster. While one old salt from the party's left wing left the hall muttering sourly, "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam," Blair's ethical language is touching a chord

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in the country—among Labour's traditional enemies, too.

That moralism has attracted the admiration of some of the most reactionary commentators in British journalism (and life on earth hasn't evolved anything as reactionary as a right-wing British journalist). Blair even writes ferocious articles for conservative newspapers. A recent op-ed about a 14-year-old hoodlum was titled, "LET'S TEACH THESE 'DEVILS' BRITISH VALUES." It ended with a call to "Use our British common sense, rediscover our traditional British values, and start to do something about it."

None of which is—how shall we put this?—the quintessence of liberalism. Blair is a moral politician who both by instinct and for calculating electoral reasons will have little truck with relativism. This makes him, however, no different from the pre-Marxist and pre-'60s generations of British radicals, from the Christian Socialists, the high-minded early feminists, the austere Liberal reformers and the working-class stalwarts of the Friendly Societies. And it envelops other, more liberal projects. On home rule for Scotland, the abolition of hereditary peers' voting rights in the House of Lords, the introduction of a British Bill of Rights and a national referendum on a change to the voting system, Blair is more radical than any Labour leader this century. The blend of high-minded Christian rhetoric and ambitious reform is one that Gladstone would have recognized and approved.

Where Blair argues that he differs entirely from today's right is in his commitment to strong social structures. He has been claimed by the communitarian Amitai Etzioni (and he isn't, God knows, alone in that). But if Blair is a communitarian it is something that has grown from his childhood religion and then from his reading of leftish and Christian philosophers like the Scot John Macmurray. It has always been there. Talking about this, again, he conveys a strong belief that these are basic ideas whose time has come: "I think that what the work of Etzioni and people like Anthony Giddens [the British political philosopher] illustrates is that there is a spiritual yearning, not for a return to the past, but for a spirit of community and partnership between people to be more strongly present, and not just the competitive urge. It's only by combining those two impulses of human nature that you get anywhere near the truth."

Perhaps all that's happening is a swing of the social pendulum back from some of the neoliberal instincts of the Reagan-Thatcher years and that Blair, like Clinton, embodies this. But with the Republican surge still flowing in the U.S. and populism resurgent across the West, isn't it naïve to argue that a leftish, moral communitarianism is on the march? Blair demurs: "What is fascinating to me now, having traveled more widely, is the similar definitions of the left of center, which return to the ideas of community and solidarity, a strong and decent society backing up the individual, which takes that spirit and reapplies it across the agenda. It's as true whether you are talking to the president of Finland or the president of the United States."

But without hard policies, clear targets and a readiness to take on the big-business interest groups, does any of this actually translate into radical policy? Isn't that part of the lesson of the failures of the Clinton presidency? "I think a lot about the experience of President Clinton. In a sense, the right was in power for so long and had the initiative for so long that the left of center and particular commentators and political acolytes around it lost confidence, and, even when Clinton was doing things that really the left should have been applauding, he never got much credit. I'm talking about government employment programs, and the encouragement of small businesses, and welfare into work. It's only three or four years on from this time, perhaps when you have got other governments in other parts of the world doing similar things, that the character of the new left of center will become clear."

He argues that both he and Clinton suffer from old thinking among the intelligentsia, who remain polarized between new right and old left: "I am constantly struck, both in the U.S. and here, by the degree to which there are a lot of commentators and writers on the left who don't seem to have moved beyond the '60s and '70s and therefore that the sense of an intellectual movement behind the new left today isn't as strong as it should be." What Blair is articulating is not paranoia toward the press but a sense of the isolation of leftish leaders who are trying to negotiate the new reefs and sandbanks of '90s politics, without the old socialist and intellectual cheerleaders. That has meant an unforgiving focus on the character of those politicians themselves. This is an age of political cynicism, and politicians who consciously raise moral hopes are in a peculiarly vulnerable position.

In this area the difference between Clinton and Blair is wide. Thus far, the younger man seems squeaky-clean, one of those '70s students who never took drugs, one of the rare attractive male politicians who has never been accused of taking lovers, a genuine family man. Conservatives find it all too good to be true, and perhaps it is. Perhaps, if he makes it to office, Tony Blair will disappoint his supporters as Clinton has.

But for now, no one will bet on that. For now, he remains the focus for all hope of reform and the first Labour leader for thirty years to be courted by business and the establishment as prime minister-elect. I was ruminating on all this with a senior Tory minister in a Commons lobby when he suddenly sighed and said: "You know, I wish this stuff was football, not politics." I asked why. "Because," said the minister, "if this was football, there would be transfer deals. The Conservative Party could just raise a couple of million and buy bloody Tony Blair." Impeccable though Blair's market credentials now are, that would probably be going too far even for him. When I told him the story, he flashed his now-famous smile. "But it isn't football," he said, "It's much more interesting than that." •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Seeing Is (Sometimes) Believing

One purpose of romance is to beguile. Events are put before us that, in cold light, we could not believe, yet if we switch on the mind's warm light, the result is pleasure. This beguiling is true of Shakespearean romance. (Who can believe that Orlando would really not have recognized Rosalind in her male dress?) It's also true, at a slightly lower level, of **The American President** (Castle Rock).

Those who can't or won't accept this film as romance will have an easy time scoffing at its improbabilities. (Just one such: Would an unmarried president invite a young woman to spend the night in the White House with her car parked right outside?) But for those who can summon up the talismanic "what if," *The American President* provides chuckles and tingles, even a few sobs.

Films of various types about the presidency are by now a sub-genre; the most recent was the generally seductive *Dave* with Kevin Kline. And if the film is sufficiently burnished in execution, which is to say that if it makes us want to snuggle up in Dreamland—Kline's did this fairly well, and the new one does it even better—we escape: not into a South Seas paradise but into a better-ordered U.S.A. For many of us, for instance, part of the escape in this latest White House romance is that the president is an avowed liberal, a card-carrying member of the ACLU and a defender of flag-burning as an American prerogative. After fantasy like that, the amorous elements seem pretty down-to-earth.

Michael Douglas plays the president as well as he has ever played anything, even a mite better. The odd element in his performance is that the slight lack of conviction, the suspicion of the insufficient, which would bother us in a different character, seem to fit Douglas here. They remind us of Bush and Clinton. (Not Reagan. He *filled* the role, if only as a role.)

But everything attractive in the film, everything that makes us go with its facile emotional flow, comes from Annette Bening, from her crispness and sparkle, from her surety as an actress. She plays a hot-shot environmental lawyer who is summoned to the White House for a special panel and intrigues the president with her candor. He asks her to be his companion at a state dinner. Developments then develop.

It must have been fun to cast the attendant parts, and the results reflect it. The Stephanopoulos role is played by Michael J. Fox, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. The Jack Warden role (so to speak), the president's mentor-adviser, is played by Martin Sheen with the requisite savvy and patience. Anna Deavere Smith lends grace to the president's press secretary, and David Paymer has dogged faith as his pollster. The president's most vocal enemy, a vicious conservative senator, gets almost enough bite from Richard Dreyfuss.

Rob Reiner, whose last big hit was *When Harry Met Sally...*, directed this film with the pace and gloss that it needs, and did equally well with the soupçons of schmaltz. But the most interesting aspect of the picture is Aaron Sorkin's screenplay, interesting because it was written directly for the screen.

I've noted here before, as a cultural manifest, the shift of talents in recent decades—from Broadway to film—as part of the reason that Broadway is lacking in plays. In bygone years, the approved path, almost sacred, was for the clever play-manufacturer to head for Broadway, make it there, then sell his play to Hollywood. Now such a craftsman doesn't often bother with the Broadway step: he eliminates the middle man. Sorkin used to write plays. Then he wrote *A Few Good Men*, which made it to Broadway, then to Hollywood. But he wrote *The American President* as a screenplay. From his point of view, this makes very good sense—and Broadway has, apparently, lost another competent artisan.

Sorkin still writes like a Broadway playwright, however, in the Kaufman-Hart, Lindsay-Crouse manner. All the characters around the main ones supply caustic choric comments to make us think that the gooey stuff at the center is realistic. All the scenes are constructed from well-proven blueprints. And, since this is a political film, the whole script moves toward the hero's closing speech in which he pulls up his moral socks and stands firm for ideals. (Remember Spencer Tracy's closing speech in *State of the Union*?)

Well, it's nice to munch on marzipan once in a while, especially if it's made in the shape of fruits and vegetables.

The first film that Sean Penn wrote and directed, *The Indian Runner*, had patches

FILMS WORTH SEEING

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of self-congratulatory moodiness, but it had some iron and grit. Its portrait of a western family of proles, who were touched with the malaise that intellectuals think their private property, had some loneliness and terror. Penn's new film, **The Crossing Guard** (Miramax), is nothing but a set of attitudes and posings, grounded in a blatant plot contrivance.

Jack Nicholson plays the owner of an L.A. jewelry shop. Six years before the film opens, his small daughter was killed by a drunken driver, played by David Morse. (The title, used figuratively, refers to the person who watches over children crossing streets.) Nicholson lives for the day of Morse's release from prison so that he can kill his child's killer. Meanwhile, his wife, Anjelica Huston, has divorced him because of his mania and has remarried. Nicholson consoles himself with strippers from a club that he frequents, as does the picture.

This theme, of a father's revenge for a child killed by a careless driver, was treated intelligently, movingly, by Claude Chabrol in *This Man Must Die.* Penn's film is very slow, sententious, ill-judged about the tensions he wants in long scenes. It reaches a conclusion vaguely like the one in Chabrol's film but via mechanical contrivances that teeter on the edge of the ridiculous, then tumble in. At the end Nicholson, paunchy and sodden, gun in hand, chases Morse through the nighttime streets seemingly for hours. This jeweler, to judge by the life we've seen him lead, would have had a heart attack in about four minutes.

Penn's screenplay is carpentered to give Nicholson plentiful chances to lose his temper, something at which he's becoming too much of a pro. He is one of the best screen actors in the world, but in this film he doesn't do much more than trot out familiar bits. Anjelica Huston is wasted. Morse has presence and intent, but he has to deal with a factitious character.

Somewhere in Penn there is talent, but his second film is a marked decline from his first. It's crammed with self-indulgence, apparently in the belief that merely to attempt gravity relieves a filmmaker of the need to make us believe in that gravity. The result is the laziest kind of arty East European anti-Hollywood effusion. •

Monsters of consciousness.

James Family Values

By Louis Menand

I.

William James, the grandfather of the philosopher, was an Irish Protestant who came to the United States in 1789, when he was 18, and settled in Albany. Without material or social advantages of any kind—he began his career as a clerk in the dry goods business—he eventually acquired a fortune. At the time of his death, in 1832, he was said to be the second wealthiest man, after John Jacob Astor, in the state of New York. Among his holdings was the village of Syracuse, which he had purchased outright in 1824.

William James had three wives (two died in childbirth) and eleven children (two died in infancy). The second surviving child of his third wife, Catharine Barber (also of Irish descent), was called Henry. He was a prodigal son. He began as a rebel against his father's Calvinist morality—he made a habit, as a boy, of stopping off at the shoemaker's on the way to school for a nip of gin; as a young man, he ran up bills for clothing and cigars on his father's credit and then dropped out of college—and he ended as a convert to a religion of his own invention. He courted the woman he eventually married, Mary Walsh (another descendant of successful Irish immigrants), by holding forth, as he paced her drawing-

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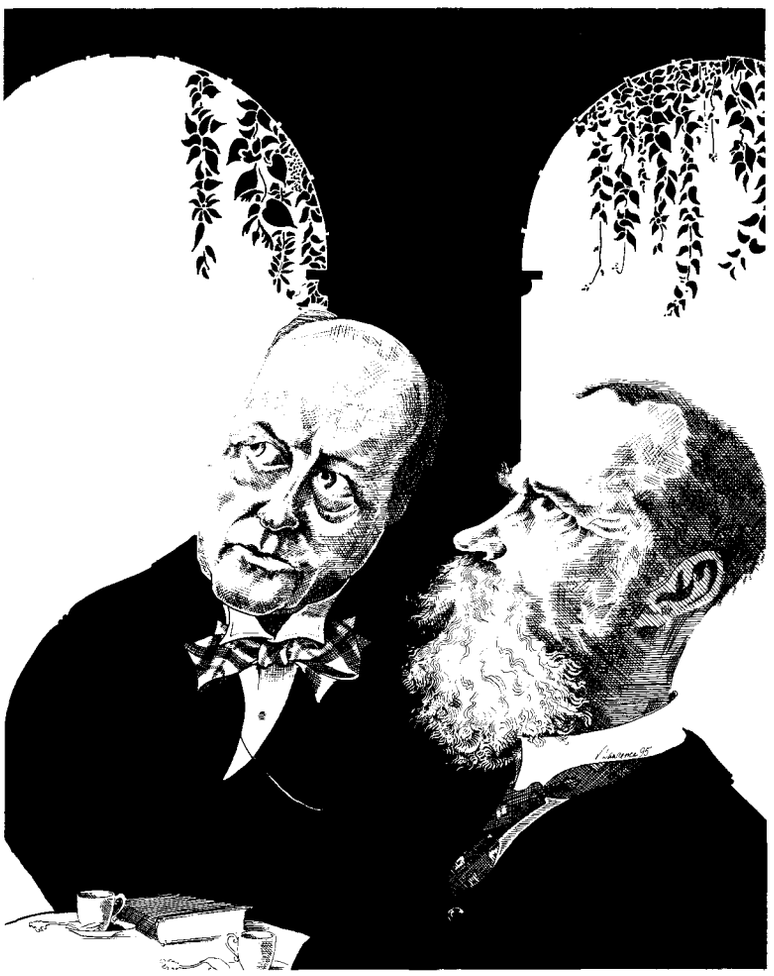
room floor, on her duty to resign her membership in the local Presbyterian church, on grounds that true religion is unmediated by institutions.

Mary and Henry had five children. The two oldest—William, born in New York City in 1842, and Henry, born in 1843—are among the most celebrated figures in American intellectual history. Two younger sons—Garth Wilkinson (known in the family as Wilky), born in 1845, and Robertson (called Bob), born in 1846—led lives which, although unhappy and comparatively obscure, were not without distinction. The fifth child, Alice, born in 1848, was the unhappiest James of all; she was also (if these qualities can be compared) the most heroic, for she was able to salvage, from an existence otherwise almost entirely blighted by physical incapacitation, an intelligence that within its own very narrow range was nearly as acute and disillusioned as that of her brother the novelist.

These people have not lacked biographical attention. There are, in addition to many specialized studies, excellent biographies of Henry the novelist (by Leon Edel and by Fred Kaplan), William the philosopher (by Ralph Barton Perry and by Gay Wilson Allen), Alice (by Jean Strouse), Wilky and Bob (by Jane Maher), the entire James family (by F. O. Matthiessen and by R.W.B. Lewis) and, now, Henry James, Senior, by Alfred Habegger. Everyone, in short, but Mary James, whose figure, if only by contrast, remains a little dim.



HENRY & WILLIAM JAMES BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Each subject has naturally seemed to gain interest by the fact of his or her relation to the others; but this interest leads into a biographer's trap. This is the tendency to treat the psychological and intellectual history of the Jameses as a history of family relations—to write as though Henry Senior was a greater influence on William's thinking than Charles Darwin, or as though the chief aim of Henry's fiction was to dramatize the psychological complexities of life as a James.

It is true that the Jameses were an unusually self-regarding family. In his autobiography, Henry commented on the "felicities of destitution [he was referring to the family's frantic itinerancy] which kept us, collectively, so genially interested in almost nothing but each other"; and there is William's well-known remark to Alice about Henry: "he is ... a native of the James family, and has no other country." But there is also Henry's fine reply, after a lifetime of enduring politely his older brother's criticism of his writing, to William's complaint about the narrative method of *The Golden Bowl* (an "interminable elaboration of suggestive reference," he called it, anticipating the judgment of many undergraduates). "I'm always sorry," Henry wrote, "when I hear of your reading anything of mine, and always hope you won't—you seem to me so constitutionally unable to 'enjoy' it, and so condemned to look at it from a point of view remotely alien to mine in writing it, and to the conditions out of which, as mine, it has inevitably sprung.... It shows how far apart and to what different ends we have had to work out (very naturally and properly) our respective intellectual lives."

The Jameses fascinated each other, but they also realized (with characteristic percipience) how important it therefore was for them to get away from each other; and this awareness constitutes the most important respect in which their choices in life were determined by family dynamics. William seems to have gone into science as a young man, despite a preference for moral philosophy, partly because moral philosophy was already his father's occupation; and although he ultimately found his way back to philosophy, it was to philosophy of a very different kind. One of the reasons Henry moved to Europe, even before he could fully support himself, was almost certainly to get out of his parents' house in Cambridge ("about as lively as the inner sepulchre," as he described it once to William during a particularly grim visit). Alice, who could find no excuse for leaving her parents when they were alive (she had hoped to marry, but was unlucky in courtship), could at least escape their ghosts, and soon after their deaths, in 1882, she moved to London. Wilky and Bob left home after the Civil War, first to run a plantation, worked by freed slaves, in Florida, and then, when that enterprise failed, to jobs in the Midwest, where they spent most of the rest of their lives. The chief influence being "a native of the James family" had on the Jameses, in short, was to inspire them to find paths that led away from the rest of the tribe.

Alfred Habegger's biography of Henry Senior succumbs a little to the temptation to invent family romances, and it has its Wagnerian moments: "Could James [the father] predict historical events by looking into his monstrous inmost heart? Which was he, a terrifyingly gifted seer or a crazed metaphysician? These were among the unanswered questions that pressed on his children." This is the biographical equivalent of carbonation. None of the younger Jameses would have dreamed of asking such portentous questions about anyone, least of all about their father, who, as virtually all evidence suggests, was regarded by his family mostly with amused affection. The dominant

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tone of the James household was high facetiousness—it was customary to seat all five children in a row on one side of the dinner table so that guests would not be accidentally stabbed with a knife in the course of their gesticulations—and biographers who misread the sarcasm and the provocation as expressions of genuine sentiment are stepping into the very kind of trap the Jameses delighted in setting.

Aside from these occasional excursions into melopsychodrama, though, *The Father* is an immensely clarifying book. It restores detail to a number of aspects of Henry's life that have tended to get blurred in books about other members of the family. One of them is the story of the amputation. When he was 13, Henry burned his right leg badly while stamping out a fire in a stable, and it has usually been understood, from his son William's later account, that two successive amputations were performed, and that Henry was then convalescent for two years. Habegger shows that this is inaccurate: Henry was actually hobbled, he says, with a progressively putrefying leg for four years, essentially his entire adolescence, before the amputation took place; and he provides gruesome descriptions of what a rotting leg involved in the days before air-conditioning, and what an amputation above the knee entailed in the days before anesthetics.

The other momentous event in Henry's early life was his disinheritance. None of William James's sheep seems to have been terribly white, but Henry was the blackest of the flock, and in consequence he became the most severely punished legatee in his Calvinist father's highly punitive will. William James died in 1832. His will delayed the final distribution of his estate for twenty years and then made provisions for denying awards to any heir judged by the executors to have led a "grossly immoral, idle or dishonorable life." Henry's initial allotment, $1,250 a year, was far smaller than any of his siblings'. So he did the American thing. He sued, twice—jointly, with the other disappointed relations, and on his own behalf—and in 1836 the will was legally voided. William was declared to have died intestate, and Henry was granted his full share of the inheritance under the laws of descent. This gave him leisure for life, and thereby made possible the extraordinary educations of his two older sons.

The full adjudication of William's estate took eight years (since various parcels of property had to be dealt with separately, even after the will had been broken), and it has been common among James biographers to portray the episode as an instance of pure Casaubonism, in which the dead hand of an anachronistic moralism grimly attempts to stifle the liberties of the free-spirited living. It is even sometimes suggested that justice delayed in this case amounted, psychologically, to justice denied. Howard M. Feinstein, in *Becoming William James* (1984), built a two-generation psychobiography around this interpretation, in which William the elder abuses his son Henry, who abuses, in turn, his son and heir, the younger William.

Habegger doesn't entirely dissent from this analysis, but he makes a couple of fresh and useful observations about the whole affair. For one thing, he explains, William's estate was not nearly as large as everyone has assumed. Three million dollars is the value usually assigned to it. Habegger figures it at closer to $1.2 million—not negligible in 1832 (or in 1995, for that matter), but there were, after all, eight direct descendants and a widow who survived her husband by twenty-seven years. Henry's slice was sufficient to make employment unnecessary: though he had a prolific career as a writer, he found it convenient to pay other people to publish his work. But he did not

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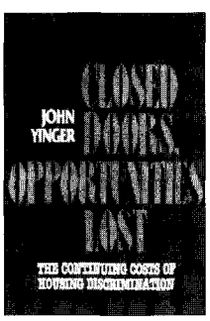

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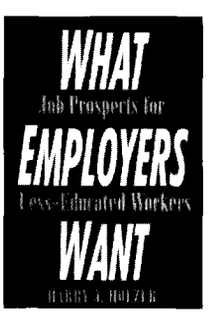

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have a vast fortune. He plunged a large chunk of his capital into Wilky and Bob's failed cotton business, and he left five heirs of his own, four of whom, though they received income from the family's Syracuse properties all their adult lives (as did Alice), had to work for a living—and, for the most part, did.

They did not live extravagantly. A vague sense still lingers from books like Maxwell Geismar's stupidly tendentious *Henry James and the Jacobites* (1963) that Henry the novelist was a leisure-class mandarin who wrote novels celebrating the perquisites of affluence. Henry the novelist was never affluent. He worked constantly; and the deliberate manner in which he strove, with very uneven success, to combine artistic integrity with commercial appeal is one of the most interesting things about his career. He had, like his contemporary Joseph Conrad, a modernist sense of art and a Victorian sense of vocation. His ambition was to achieve what Dickens and Thackeray and George Eliot had achieved, which was to write great novels that sold a lot of copies. But he didn't just want to be popular. He also needed the money.

Habegger's other point about the will of William is that, although its letter was eventually broken, its spirit effectively triumphed. For, as Habegger shows, Henry spent several years after his father's death roaming around upstate New York on a general binge of drinking and gambling. Four years later, when the will was finally voided and the money started coming in, he had become born again, a happy casualty of the religious revival of the 1830s. If the money had gotten into his pockets right away, in 1832, in other words, Henry might very well have spent it by 1836, and the story of the James family would be rather different. William's scheme to deprive Henry of his inheritance until he could be certain not to waste it bore its intended fruit after all.

What is most useful about Habegger's book, though, is its devastating account of Henry's thought. Both F. O. Matthiessen, in *The James Family* (1948), and R.W.B. Lewis, in *The Jameses: A Family Narrative* (1991), went to some lengths to establish the senior James as an intellectual figure who could plausibly be discussed on a par with his two famous sons. Matthiessen felt confident enough about this to conclude his book with the assertion that although "the free spirits" of the sons "are among the most magnificent productions of our American nineteenth century ... Henry Senior's insight was more profound." No one who has read *The Father* is likely to agree.

The first problem is simply outfitting the father with a coherent and respectable philosophy of life, something that turns out to depend on the extent of one's willingness to suppress parts of the record. Coherence was not Henry Senior's strong point. It was, in fact, scarcely a point with him at all. He was the sort of thinker for whom (to borrow a phrase of Oliver Wendell Holmes) certitude was the only proof that certainty required. "A skeptical state ... I have never known for a moment," he once confessed; and he was thus able to throw off, without a backward glance, positions he had previously staked everything on.

Henry Senior's thought has come down to us, through his son William's edition of his literary remains and through Matthiessen's volume (which is essentially an anthology of Jamesiana with commentary), as a kind of ur-communitarianism, a philosophy asserting the paramount reality of society against the baleful fiction of "the autonomous individual." But as Habegger explains, before he became a stalwart anti-individualist, Henry was for a number of years a stalwart super-individualist, who dismissed social laws as mere chaff before the progress of the divine ego.

The inconsistency is illustrated most entertainingly by Henry's handling of the issue with which he was, in his own lifetime, most vividly associated in the public mind: the doctrine of free love. Under the combined influence of the principal tutelary genuises of his thought, Emmanuel Swedenborg and Charles Fourier, he started out as an unequivocal free-lover. "If society left its subject free to follow the divine afflatus of his passion whithersoever it carried him," he wrote in the Fourierist journal *The Harbinger*, "we should never hear of such a thing as sexual promiscuity or fornication."

> I presume a day will come when the sexual relations will be regulated in every case by the private will of the parties; when the reciprocal affection of a man and a woman will furnish the sole and sufficient sanction of their material converse.... Thus, if a man's or a woman's affections bind them to an exclusive alliance all their days, the law will approve. If, on the contrary, they lead the subject to a varied alliance, the law will equally approve.

Or as he put it, a little more pungently, on another occasion: when God "sends us our wives, the statute against adultery will confess itself superfluous." Society and nature, he announced, "should have no power to identify me with a particular potato-patch ... all my days." Gertrude Himmelfarb, please say hello to the Victorian Henry James.

Henry soon found himself embarrassed—not by the enemies of free love, but by the proponents, who were glad for the chance to claim him as one of their own. When he was named as an ally in Marx Edgeworth Lazarus's *Love vs. Marriage* (1852), an argument for sexual promiscuity, he started furiously to backpedal. He arranged to review Lazarus's book in one of the many places he was given space to publish in return for the occasional "donation," Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, and proceeded to preach the gospel of connubiality. It was precisely its suppression of the male sexual instinct, he now explained, that made marriage such a divine state. Though the married woman will always disappoint "the promise which the unappropriated woman held out" (as he suavely put it), it is man's duty to overcome this frustration of his sexual passion and to realize his own divinity in his wife's "downcast eyes." James was ridiculed for the reversal, but his apotheosis of marriage marked the key turn in his thinking. "A new ideal, transformation through servitude, had moved to the center of James's social thought," says Habegger, "displacing his reckless antinomianism and dulling his interest in liberal social reform."

This is the origin of James's "communitarian" phase; and following as it did from the realization that Slavery is Freedom, it led him to a series of positions which one does not exactly see featured in sympathetic accounts of his thought. He identified individualism, even in the narrow sense of a belief in the moral agency of persons, as a sin: "the sole ground of every evil known to the spiritual universe," he announced in *The Nature of Evil* (1855). He adopted, and preached continually, a rigid gender hierarchy. Woman bears "a strictly subsidiary or dependent relation toward man," he claimed. Woman is "man's inferior in passion, his inferior in intellect, and his inferior in physical strength." "Every man knows," he said elsewhere, "that any great development of passion or intellect in woman is sure to prejudice his devotion." A woman has no "right to be plain; her nature entitles her to be beautiful only." She is, very properly, man's "patient and unrepining drudge, his beast of burden, his toilsome ox, his dejected ass."

Jean Strouse, in her superb life of the

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unlucky Alice, naturally gave this side of Henry's thought the attention due to it, and she also provided a rare glimpse of the other woman (besides Alice) whose standing in the James household becomes interesting in light of these remarks. In her family's recollections, Mary James's obscurity is explained, in effect, as a consequence of her extraordinary motherly devotion and self-effacement. But it is also possible to see it as a consequence of her intellectual and temperamental remoteness from the rest of the family. Strouse cites a description by Lilla Cabot, the wife of Henry the novelist's childhood friend Thomas Sergeant Perry, which, although catty enough, is still suggestive. Lilla Cabot remembered the "poky banality of the James house ruled by Mrs. James where HJ's father used to limp in and out and never seemed really to 'belong' to his wife or Miss Walsh [Mary's unmarried sister], large florid stupid seeming ladies.... James's mother (even to my own perception as a child) was the very incarnation of *banality* and his aunt Miss Walsh who lived with them was not much better."

Habegger fails to mention this bit of evidence, but he quotes from an exchange of letters between Mary and the wife of one of Henry Senior's English friends that reveals a vulgar snobbishness that is fairly chilling. Strouse refers to Mary's "tyrannical selfishness," and behavior that is described as "self-effacing" can certainly look, from a less genial point of view, passive-aggressive and domineering. It is unlikely, in short, that the older Henry found his own divinity reflected back from the downcast eyes of his wife. His views about marriage seem to have been not only entirely theoretical, but a little wishful, too.

Henry declined to become an abolitionist, on grounds that the abolitionists "attack slavery as an institution rather than as a principle.... The practical working of the institution has been on the whole, I doubt not, favorable to the slave in a moral point of view; it is only the master who from recent developments seems to have been degraded by it, spiritually, out of every lineament of manhood." When his son Wilky was brought home seriously wounded after helping to lead the disastrous charge of the Massachusetts 54th, a black regiment, on Fort Wagner, he inquired whether the black soldiers had wavered during the attack, and he remained dubious, Habegger reports, even after his son insisted that they had not. He considered Catholicism a religion for peasants. He referred to the papacy, in a letter to Henry Junior, then on his first visit to Rome, as a "foul wart"; and Habegger has discovered that one of his gifts to the Princeton Theological Seminary, where he had been a student, was a set of *The Protestant Penny Magazine*, a Catholic-baiting Irish paper whose announced design was "to secure a general circulation ... among the lower orders." In his last book, *Society the Redeemed Form of Man*, published in 1879, he described the Jews as a "filthy race."

Latter-day communitarians, and writers eager to demonstrate a James family intellectual genealogy, may make of the thinker who held these views what they will. His son William's assessment is worth bearing in mind. "I am going slowly through his other books," he wrote to his brother Henry shortly after the publication of their father's *The Secret of Swedenborg* (a book to which William Dean Howells's reaction is famous: "He kept it"). "I will write you more when I have read more. Suffice it that many points which before were incomprehensible to me because doubtfully fallacious, I now definitely believe to be entirely fallacious.... His ignorance of the way of thinking of other men, and his cool neglect of their difficulties, is fabulous in a writer on such subjects."

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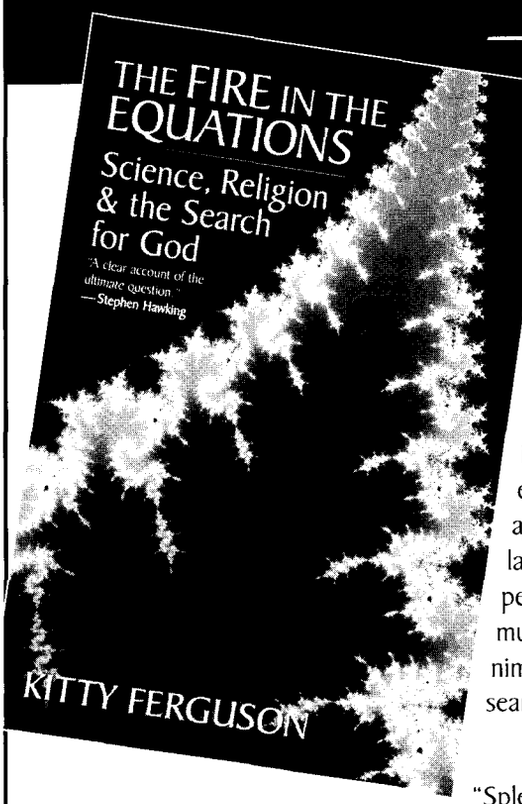
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II.

One of the classic misreadings of Jamesian tone concerns the letter that William wrote in 1905 turning down an invitation to become a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He gave a number of reasons for declining, and then added: "I am more encouraged in this course by the fact that my younger and shallower and vainer brother [i.e., Henry] is already in the Academy and that if I were there too, the other families represented might think the James influence too rank and too strong." Many commentators, notably Edel and Lewis, have adduced this sentence as evidence of the existence of a lifelong sibling rivalry between the two older James brothers. "The letter seemed to imply once again," concluded Edel, "that it was impossible for Jacob and Esau to live under the same roof, to be in the same room—or Academy—and occupy seats side by side."

In fact, as Gerald Myers has pointed out in *William James: His Life and Thought* (1986) (it is mostly devoted to the thought), Henry happened to be visiting William in his New Hampshire summer house on the day the letter was written, and since there is no mention of the "vainer and shallower" James in an earlier draft written before Henry's arrival, William almost certainly added that sentence for the delectation of the brother who was, in effect, looking over his shoulder as he wrote it. "I have located nothing in my review of the correspondence and family documents to suggest an underlying rivalry between the two brothers," Myers concluded, thereby dispensing in one laconic sentence with the central psychological thesis of Edel's five-volume life of Henry. The whole of the brothers' correspondence is now available in three large volumes (part of a projected twelve-volume edition of William's letters), and there is nothing in it to dispute Myers's finding. It was, as we say, a great relationship.

This is not to say that there was no rivalry. It is to say (as Myers does) only that there was no *underlying* rivalry, no subconscious neurotic tension that drove the brothers in directions that they would not otherwise have chosen. For although Henry Senior was, as Habegger convincingly argues, a man always fairly opaque to himself, this was not a gene he passed along to any of his children, and there is something a little amazing in the avidity with which so many writers on the Jameses have proposed psychological "causes" for their successes and failures in life.

For when it comes to the analysis of character, it is nearly impossible to outsmart the Jameses themselves. Almost the finest thing about Matthiessen's *The James Family* was his willingness to make his points as succinctly as possible and then get off the stage and let the Jameses speak for themselves. After reading several hundred pages of their appraisals of each other, their world and themselves, it is hard to see how anyone could imagine that he or she had something "psychological" to add.

Yet people do imagine it, and the sibling rivalry theory is one of the most persistent of the devices by which biographers contrive to bind the fate of the various Jameses to each other. The Jameses may sometimes have conceived of their fates as in some sense bound, but these were not naïve readers of the self and its others. William and Henry didn't just have a knack for psychological insight. They were two of the greatest psychological minds that ever lived; and if there was a rivalry between them, they seem to have been perfectly aware of it, and to have factored it in, as it were, to their relations with one another.

It is true that William could be surprisingly obtuse in his dealings with Henry and Alice. But whenever Henry or Alice objects, in the correspondence, to the tone he has taken with them, William grasps their point of view immediately. This sort of friction was probably more a product of temperament than anything else. William was that way with everybody. He liked to make fairly quick, rough-and-ready judgments of situations: he regarded being satisfied with his first impression as a tribute to the virtues of spontaneity and common sense. Henry and Alice were not slower, exactly, but they were subtler readers of character. The novelist and the invalid were gifted with greater acuity than the internationally renowned psychologist.

William was, from the beginning, the most obviously talented of the children, and it was principally for his sake that the family undertook its notorious odyssey in search of what Henry Senior called a "sensuous education." Henry's attitude toward education followed from his attitude toward religion: all institutional embodiments of it were suspect. His solution to this inconvenience was to move his children in and out of schools too quickly for any one of them to do lasting damage.

It has been estimated by R.W.B. Lewis that by the time the family left New York City, in 1855, when William was 13, William and Henry had attended at least ten different schools. As it turned out, this was a period of unusual stability. In the summer of that year, Henry took the family to Geneva, but by October, Henry had concluded that Swiss schools were overrated and the Jameses moved to London. In June 1856, they left for Paris, where they changed residences within the city three times during the year, then moved to Boulogne-sur-Mer. In the fall, they returned to Paris; in December, they returned to Boulogne. At the end of the academic year, William told his father that his true interest was painting, and the family moved back across the Atlantic to Newport, so that William could study with the painter William Morris Hunt.

Within six months, Henry Senior had grown unhappy again with American schooling, and the family returned to Geneva, where William became a student at the Geneva Academy, and Henry, for reasons not easily imagined, was sent to a polytechnic school. In July 1860 most of the family moved to Bonn so that the children could learn German (a language Henry Senior did not speak), but the plan was abandoned. By September the Jameses were back in Newport, and William was painting again. In 1861 William dropped art and entered the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard to study chemistry. (The next year Henry joined him in Cambridge, entering, in another inexplicable miscalculation, Harvard Law School; he lasted a year.) In January 1863 William dropped out of Lawrence; in the fall he went back again, but switched to comparative anatomy. In 1864 he entered Harvard Medical School. A year later, disenchanted with medicine, he went on a scientific expedition to Brazil. This left him disenchanted with naturalism, so he returned to medical school. In 1867 he went to Germany, where he spent a year, most of it at a spa, reading literature and philosophy. In 1868 he returned to Cambridge, and the following year took, without enthusiasm, his medical degree—the only course of study he ever completed. As soon as he had passed his exams, he had a nervous collapse that lasted three years.

The effect this peripatetic schooling had on the James children varied according to the child. The one who seems to have minded it the least was Henry, who was so embarrassed about it for his father that he omitted one of the Boulogne and one of the Newport episodes from his autobiography, but whose passion for saturating himself in impressions was stimulated rather than stifled by the experience. Wilky and Bob, on the other hand, seem

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to have become convinced, as they trailed after their older brothers, of their intellectual inferiority. They went off to war (something William seems scarcely to have contemplated) when they were boys—Wilky was 17, Bob was 16—both serving in black regiments, Wilky as Robert Gould Shaw's adjutant in the Massachusetts 54th and Bob in the 55th. Wilky in particular distinguished himself, but the experience only set him and Bob farther apart from the rest of the family, and Bob, at least, was never able afterwards to discover a focus for his life. Alice, too, once wondered "whether if I had had an education I should have been more or less of a fool than I am"; but hers was a special case, since, according to Henry Senior's cosmology, serious schooling would only have spoiled her chances at becoming some man's dejected ass. Alice's education would have been just as thoroughly neglected if the Jameses had never left New York.

For his part, William, although he was the only one of the children to enjoy anything like a real schooling, resented the whole business. He used to say of his education that he "never had any," and he once complained that the first lecture on psychology he ever heard was the first one he gave as a professor of psychology at Harvard. He eventually became a professor of philosophy, but he had never had any academic training in that subject either, and he always felt himself at a disadvantage in arguments with people who had had a real training in logic, such as his friend Charles Peirce and his colleague Josiah Royce. When he retired from teaching, in 1907, he confessed to Henry that "as a 'professor' I always felt myself a sham, with its chief duties of being a walking encyclopedia of erudition."

But William's lack of systematic education did give him (as his disciple John Dewey observed) one tremendous advantage: it enabled him to approach intellectual problems uninhibited by received academic wisdom. He could honestly feel that he was responsible for his beliefs to no one but himself; and this not only lent enthusiasm to his convictions, it also made it easier for him to re-examine those convictions when he felt them beginning to operate as prejudices. He valued first impressions, but he was always happy to be given the chance to form new ones.

William had also a deeply skittish nature—so skittish that it is hard to know whether even the most conventional education would have prevented him from being the kind of thinker he was. In *Becoming William James*, Feinstein put much of the blame for William's

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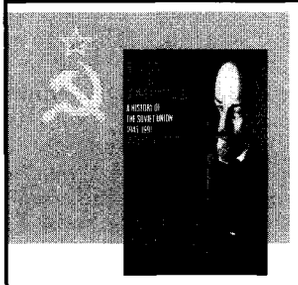

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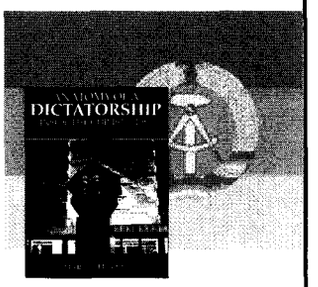

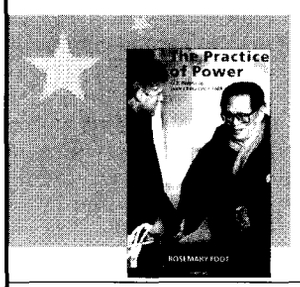

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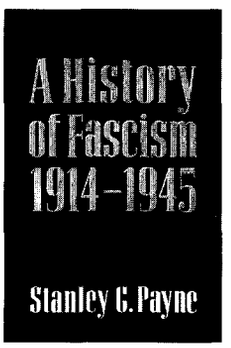

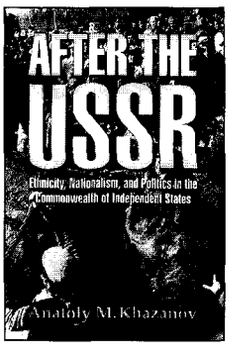

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uncertainty about his career on mixed signals from Henry Senior. As a role model, Henry Senior was certainly a dizzy enough example for anybody; but William had an aversion to making up his mind that was all his own. After switching his allegiance from science to art and back again, he spent many more years, as an adult, vacillating between science and philosophy. He devoted several years to the courtship of the woman he married, Alice Howe Gibbens, virtually torturing her with his indecision. He named their youngest son Francis; when the child seemed to dislike the name, he called him John; when the boy was 7, he officially changed the name to Alexander.

When his family irritated him—as it often did: one of their children later described terrific shouting matches between William and Alice—he would sometimes go off alone to his country house in New Hampshire; as soon as he arrived, he began sending love letters back home. Whenever he was in Europe (it was his habit to be out of town whenever his wife was in childbirth), he announced his distaste for European life and his affection for everything American. When he returned, he complained about America and longed to be in Europe again. "He's just like a blob of mercury," his sister Alice wrote, near the end of her life, after William had paid her a flying visit in London; "you cannot put a mental finger upon him."

Yet everyone adored him. One of the few people whose feelings about him were even ambivalent was George Santayana, his student and then colleague in the Harvard philosophy department, and Santayana's characteristically mordant complaint gives a good idea what it was that other people found so charismatic: "He was so extremely natural that there was no knowing what his nature was, or what to expect next; so that one was driven to behave and talk conventionally, as in the most artificial society."

One way to explain James's appeal is to say that he was without vanity, and that he was a genius. No amour propre prevented him from taking an interest in a new person or a new idea, or from setting aside, in response to a fresh stimulus, a view he had just developed. Unlike his father, he did not associate having an opinion automatically with dogmatism: he was one of the least dogmatic persons who ever wrote philosophy. And every idea he took up he made attractive and compelling by his remarkable gift of expression. He believed, he once told Bernard Berenson, "that every gush of feeling should be followed by adequate action," and he was a person who experienced many gushes. That they sometimes conflicted with one another did not, in his view, lessen his obligation to respect each one.

Though his interests shifted continuously, James's thought did not pass through stages, or achieve its unity by excluding opposing positions. When he saw (as he eventually did) the limitations of one way of looking at things, he tried a different way—as when, believing that the claims of science were being taken too seriously, he developed an interest in the claims of religion, and even in the claims of psychism (something he confused a little with religion). He never rejected the approach that he had set to one side, though. It became for him simply another point of view, one that was true whenever it proved (in pragmatism's totemic phrase) good in the way of belief. His education seems to have consisted not as it normally does in learning how to rule certain kinds of experience out of the bounds of intellectual consideration, but in finding a place in his understanding for everything he felt. If the term "sensuous education" means something, this is probably it.

Henry had none of his brother's volatility. His pet name in the family was "the Angel," and he seems to have possessed (as his mother and his sister especially felt) a constant fund of sympathy. He claimed that he knew his vocation instinctively: "My face was turned from the first to the idea of representation—that of the gain of charm, interest, mystery, dignity, distinction, gain of importance infinite on the part of the represented thing," he wrote in the first volume of his autobiography, *A Small Boy and Others* (1913), and there is nothing in his life to make us doubt it. (The odd educational choices all seem to have been somebody else's idea.) "I know what I want," he wrote his parents from London in 1880, two years after "Daisy Miller" had made him a literary celebrity; "—it stares one in the face, as big and round and bright as the full moon."

This single-mindedness about his career did not make Henry's temperament any less inclusive than William's. "Nothing is my *last word* about anything," he wrote to a reviewer who had complained about his view of the English in a particular story; "—I am interminably supersubtle and analytic.... It will take a much cleverer person than myself to discover my last impression ... of anything." Santayana met him only once, but he thought that "in that one interview [Henry] made me feel more at home, and better understood, than his brother William ever had done in the long years of our acquaintance. Henry was calm, he liked to see things as they are, and be free afterwards to imagine how they might have been.... He was ... subtle and bland, appreciative of all points of view, and amused at their limitations." William acted out human variability; Henry embodied it. William was a magnet, drawing things to himself without changing his own nature. Henry was a sponge.

Henry cultivated this persona of the perfectly disengaged, perfectly sympathetic sensibility to a point that seemed to some people to be beyond affectation, and even to approach the limits of recognizable social being. "He had reacted with so much success against the American accent and the English manner," wrote his secretary, Theodora Bosanquet, "that he seemed only doubtfully Anglo-Saxon. He might perhaps have been some species of disguised cardinal, or even a Roman nobleman amusing himself by playing the part of an Essex squire." William's similar impression of Henry, in an 1889 letter to Alice, is often quoted: "He has covered himself, like some marine crustacean, with all sorts of material growths, rich sea-weeds and rigid barnacles and things, and lives hidden in the midst of his strange heavy alien manners and customs; but they are all but 'protective resemblances,' under which the same dear old, good, innocent and at bottom very powerless-feeling Harry remains, caring for little but his writing, and full of dutifulness and affection for all gentle things."

The imputation of "powerlessness" would have given offense to Henry, and it offends many of Henry's critical admirers. Ross Posnock's study of the brothers, *The Trial of Curiosity* (1991), is probably the strongest defense of Henry's way of "being in the world" against William's that has so far appeared; and although the book's heavily doctrinal treatment of its subject—a violently Manichean opposition between "monadic individualism" (William: very bad) and the socially constructed (Henry: very theoretically correct)—is a little maddening, Posnock has some interesting ideas about Henry's personality. He derives one of them from Freud's essay on Leonardo, who, Freud concluded, was the unusual case of a person in whom "the libido evades the fate of repression by being sublimated from the very beginning into curiosity.... Research becomes to some extent compulsive and a substitute for sexual activity," and the mature man retains the sensibility of "the little boy as he gazed in wonder on the world."

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This is exactly the kind of speculation that can lead to disaster in analyzing a James, but Posnock is delicate and sensible about it, and it is not necessary to accept the Freudian machinery to feel that the distinctive character of Henry's response to experience can be usefully thought about as a form of displaced sexual energy. There is, particularly in the late novels, the autobiographical volumes, and the astonishing and weirdly brilliant study of American life, *The American Scene* (1907), something about the intensity of the author's focus, and about his pleasure in drawing the act of representation out as elaborately as possible, that is rarely felt by most adults except when they are in the middle of a sexual experience. "The gain of charm, interest, mystery ... on the part of the represented thing": James's language was a kind of dressing and undressing of the world.

III.

There is no evidence that Henry James ever read his brother's greatest work, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), and although he claimed to have read the book that has become his brother's most popular work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), he seems not to have commented on it anywhere. But Henry did read William's late writings on pragmatism, and he responded effusively, declaring that he was a pragmatist, too. "I was lost in the wonder of the extent to which all my life I have (like M. Jourdain) unconsciously pragmatised," he wrote to William after reading *Pragmatism* in 1907. "You are immensely and universally right." And after getting the companion volume, *The Meaning of Truth*: "I, for my part, feel Pragmatic invulnerability constituted." This has seemed a cue to get Henry's novels together with William's philosophy; but it is not very clear what the juxtaposition accomplishes.

One gross historical way of looking at pragmatism is to see it as the consummation of liberal Protestantism. Protestantism, on this view, is like a helium balloon: it begins its history touching the ceiling and it ends up resting on the floor. It's still a balloon; it still has "Here I stand" stamped all over it; it's just that the supernaturalism has all leaked out. It has almost lost the sense of what, as a particular way of belief, it implies, but it is still very clear about what it defines itself against: external authority, or, in a word, the Church of Rome.

This part of the inner polemics of pragmatism has dropped out of the story, but the pieces are there to see. The essay of Charles Peirce's from which Jamesian pragmatism derives, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" (1878), is (as Ian Hacking has pointed out) explicitly a response to the sanctioning of the doctrine of papal infallibility by the Vatican Council of 1870. James himself, thirty-seven years later, called pragmatism the equivalent of the Protestant Reformation; and his identification with the spirit of the Reformation is evident even in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). That work is usually admired as an expression of humane curiosity about religious feeling in all its forms; but its principal model for religious feeling is *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and its author plainly finds most of the stories of the Catholic saints he discusses slightly ridiculous. It is not exactly emphasized by neo-pragmatists today, but James, from the beginning, saw pragmatism not as a means for getting supernaturalism out of our picture of the world, but as a way of allowing for the possibility of religious belief in a scientific age. This was the point of the lecture which introduced the term "pragmatism" to the world, "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" (1898), and it is the culminating argument of *Pragmatism* itself. "You see," he says on the final page, "that pragmatism can be called religious."

There doesn't seem any useful means of situating Henry the novelist in this way of understanding pragmatism as a covert legitimation of the claims of the spirit. The notion that William's late interest in religious experience (which he ascribed to a renewed appreciation for his father's intellectual obsession) is matched by a parallel interest of Henry's has led various commentators to propose ways of linking *The Varieties of Religious Experience* with Henry's late novel *The Wings of the Dove*—a proposal given a boost, in the eyes of the people who make it, by the fact that the books happen to have been published in the same year.

But the "religious" interpretation of *The Wings of the Dove* depends on understanding Milly Theale as a spiritual force of absolute goodness, and this seems a misreading of the book. Milly Theale is a dying woman who forgives the man she loves (his name is Densher) for manipulating her affections so that he can use her money after she dies to marry someone else; and she is certainly some kind of spiritual force, from one point of view a good one. But she is also, as R. P. Blackmur once said of her, "the worst temptation, once seen the most corrupting, appealing with the best impossible appeal to the worst in our natures." For she makes the actual life seem unlivable, and in saving the conscience of the man she

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forgives, she deprives him of his chance at happiness, since after her death he cannot bring himself to marry the woman he really loves (whose name is Kate Croy). As pure as her intentions were, Milly would have served Densher better by hating him. James was not interested in Milly as a saint, or as an inspiration to spirituality. He was interested in her as a type, and as he did with all his characters, he conceived of the difference a Milly makes in the world dialectically.

The moral (if that doesn't sound too much like the "last word") of *The Wings of the Dove* is the moral of all James's fiction—a moral which Fred Kaplan, in his admirably balanced and sensible one-volume biography of Henry (a much-needed refreshment in a field dominated for so long by Edel's self-consciously "magisterial" life), has managed to put in two very un-Henry-James-sounding words: "Just live." "Just live" is also arguably the moral of William's version of pragmatism: do the right thing, and the metaphysics will take care of themselves. In Henry's work, however, the message has a sting.

Pragmatism can be readily detached from the religious purposes William James hoped it might serve and placed in a different context, which is the story of attempts to make abstract thought compatible with the conditions of modern life. Modern life, in this account, is a totality which can never be experienced as such. There are many discourses, many vocabularies that can help us to grasp some aspect of the modern world, but no discourse ever counts as final, or as unrevisable by some other discourse. Each of the vocabularies available to us can be useful as a way of making sense of some part of our experience; each can feel more or less like home; but there is always the house next door, where life goes on a little differently. There is no discourse that covers every case.

The idea that it might be the discourse that covers every case is one of the dreams of philosophy, and the insistence that this idea is an illusion was the starting point of Jamesian pragmatism. "All homes are in finite experience," James wrote in *Pragmatism*; "finite experience as such is homeless. Nothing outside of the flux secures the issue of it." James saw pragmatism as an argument for accepting the impossibility of ever arriving at a final philosophical accounting of the universe and its ways; and its strength, for him, consisted in relieving abstract thought of this burden, the burden of what Dewey later called "the quest for certainty." Ideas were justified, said James, by their "cash value," by the work they might do for us in the world. There was no transcendental or transhistorical standard by which to measure their validity, and no imperative that we square them philosophically with every other idea we might once have found useful.

It is easy to mistake pragmatism for an attack on monism and idealism, to regard it as a philosophy for pluralists and empiricists. But James insisted that pragmatism took no position on monism or pluralism; it argued only that monism, pluralism or any other philosophical position can only be true to the extent that it makes a real difference in our experience—that it "works." Implicit in that argument is the assumption that different temperaments naturally incline to different -isms. People want different things and, therefore, they have use for different kinds of "belief" in their efforts to cope with their experience. A belief, for James, had no greater metaphysical stature than, say, a fork. When your fork proves inadequate to the task of eating soup, it makes little sense to argue about whether there is something inherent in the nature of forks or something inherent in the nature of soup that accounts for the failure. You just reach for a spoon.

If Henry James was a pragmatist, he was a pragmatist in just the sense that he accepted the pointlessness of attempting to come up with an abstract formulation that will cover all the cases with which experience confronts us. His subject was the moral life, but he had no interest in morality as such. He was expert in seeing how actions that seem immoral from one point of view (for example, Kate Croy's actions in *The Wings of the Dove*) can seem perfectly moral from another point of view. This was, in fact, a constant theme with him, and it is one of the reasons he was drawn continually to the "international" plot, in which Americans and Europeans get into trouble trying to decode one another's moral "styles."

But there is a sense in which it doesn't make much sense to argue about whether Henry was a pragmatist. For, unlike his brother, Henry was not writing about the incommensurability of beliefs. He was writing about the incommensurability of desires, and the incommensurability of desires is not a problem that can be solved by debunking metaphysics. Henry's novels are about all the things human beings do to try to prevent other human beings from "just living," and they are therefore about the impossibility of ever making the friction between my desire and your desire go away. People want different things, but one of the things they want is other people. They do not seek to gain the piece they want of another person by trying out beliefs to see which one will work. They do it by exercising powers which do not arise from beliefs and which cannot be defended against by beliefs. Sexuality is one form of power for gaining this control; money is another; goodness is a third.

Sex and money were primary pigments in Jamesian fiction from the start. His great perception as a realist writer, though, was that goodness can be their equal as a source of power over other people. James himself, in one of the prefaces for the New York edition, was critical of his tendency in his earliest fiction to construct his villains along Balzacian lines. He was thinking about the Bellegardes, the fallen aristocrats who, in *The American* (1877), contrive to ruin the engagement of the American Christopher Newman to the family daughter; but even in his more realist early writing, the controlling figures—like Gilbert Osmond, in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881)—are manifestly selfish in their designs. They are almost melodramatically nefarious. We do not have difficulty estimating their moral worth.

With Olive Chancellor, in *The Bostonians*, and Christina Light, in *The Princess Casamassima*, both published in 1886, James succeeded in creating more ambiguous moral types. But his supreme inventions are characters like Maggie Verver, in *The Golden Bowl* (1904), May Bartram, in "The Beast in the Jungle" (1903), and Milly Theale—characters who do all the novelistic work of villains while clothed in the vestments of light. Their authority derives from the purity of their motives. They bend, and they break, the will of other characters; but their hands never leave their sides. Henry James took the great nineteenth-century story of innocence defeated by experience and turned it on its head.

We don't need to see Henry in the company of William, or any other philosopher, because we can see him better where he wanted to be seen, in the company of novelists. In understanding modern life as a free-for-all of hopelessly mediated desires, the nineteenth-century novel was way ahead of nineteenth-century philosophy. "I was lost in the wonder of the extent to which all my life I have (like M. Jourdain) unconsciously pragmatised." The self-effacing delicacy of this is beautiful. For what it says is, "How happy that you have understood by philosophizing something I find I have always known by instinct." Only a James would have put it quite this way, knowing that another James would understand exactly what he meant. •

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Method in Madness

By Mark Ford

Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton by Mark Polizzotti

(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 754 pp., $35)

The first recorded use of the word "surrealist" occurs in 1917 in the program notes written by Guillaume Apollinaire for Jean Cocteau's ballet *Parade*, an all-star affair performed by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes on sets designed by Picasso to music composed by Satie. A month later Apollinaire sub-titled his own play *Les Mamelles de Tiresias*, or *The Teats of Tiresias*, "a surrealist drama," and offered this explanation of the term: "When man tried to imitate walking he created the wheel, which does not resemble a leg. He then performed an act of Surrealism without realising it."

Les Mamelles de Tiresias is a pretty silly burlesque, but its stormy one-off performance proved of crucial significance to the man who became known as the "Pope of Surrealism." In 1917, André Breton was 21 and a medical orderly in the Army. The play, which was three hours late getting underway, was jeered and heckled throughout the first act. In the interval, a riot broke out, and Breton spotted his friend Jacques Vaché, dressed as an English officer, waving a loaded pistol and threatening to fire on the crowd. Breton rushed forward to soothe his irascible friend, but secretly thrilled to his display of exemplary recklessness. The defiantly gun-toting Vaché, Breton later declared, "cut the figure of an enlightener."

Breton was never content himself with the mere acting out of his extreme fantasies of confrontation and nonconformism. He genuinely believed that the Surrealist enterprise would revolutionize all aspects of existence—aesthetic, political, social—by liberating the unconscious processes of the mind. "Surrealism," he explained in his first *Manifesto* of 1924, "is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dreams, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin once and for all all other psychic mechanisms and to substitute itself for them in solving all principal problems of life."

Breton's vast and varied writings—from the scattiest poetic word cluster to the most thunderous of his polemics—are uniformly driven by his desire to develop a belief system based entirely on the latent patterns of connection that the rational mind ignores or suppresses. Only by attending to illogic, coincidence and chance can one hope to escape reason's deathly stranglehold—first imposed, Breton argues, by Graeco-Roman culture—and enter the realm of the marvelous and beautiful: "Beauty will be CONVULSIVE," as he famously declared at the conclusion of his memoir-romance *Nadja*, "or will not be at all."

Breton's most interesting texts (*Nadja*, 1928; *Communicating Vessels*, 1932; *Mad Love*, 1937; *Arcanum 17*, 1944) are not themselves works of convulsive beauty so much as commentaries on the eruption of convulsive beauty into his own life, each time in the shape of a woman to whom he found himself irresistibly attracted. Breton worshiped writing that might be described as convulsively beautiful through and through—Lautréamont's *Maldoror*, the poetry of Rimbaud, de Sade's *The 120 Days of Sodom*—but was himself as concerned to interpret convulsive experience as to present it. He examines each meeting or episode like a detective searching for clues, fanatically scrutinizing the slightest memory or allusion for evidence of the uncanny and inexplicable. In *Mad Love*, for instance, he realizes that a poem ("Sunflower") written over a decade earlier is wholly "*prophetic*" of the affair on which he has just embarked. He unearths in it specific references to places and people that the couple observed on their first night walk together, and finds that it even mentions swimming: at the time he met her, Jacqueline Lamba (who became his second wife) worked as a nude underwater dancer at a large Montmartre music hall.

Breton's obsession with discovering relations of this sort governs not only his autobiographical writings, but his entire sense of his identity. He was born on February 19, 1896, but he later amended his birthday to February 18, a

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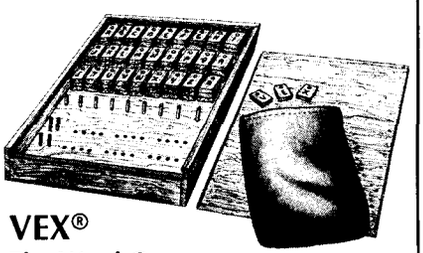

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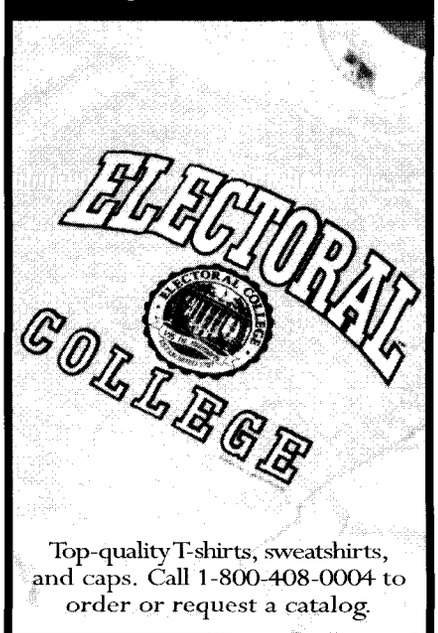

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date that allowed him to claim significant astrological links with two of his major literary heroes, Rimbaud and Gérard de Nerval. His pursuit of what he called the "circumstantial-magical" always involved a rigorous screening out of whoever or whatever failed to contribute to his own conception of Surrealist liberation. Group members who disagreed with or challenged their leader were swiftly expelled. Conversely, chance finds such as the large wooden spoon with a small shoe carved at the tip of its handle described in *Mad Love*, or the "irregular, white, shellacked half-cylinder" of *Nadja*, or Nadja herself, become for Breton suddenly replete with intense mysterious significance, treasures whose appeal he ponders at inordinate, portentous length.

The wooden spoon, picked up at the flea market on a shopping spree with Giacometti, comes to embody the entire Cinderella myth:

> It was when I got home and placed the spoon on a piece of furniture that I suddenly saw it charged with all the associative and interpretative qualities which had remained inactive while I was holding it. It was clearly changing right under my eyes. From the side, at a certain height, the little wood shoe coming out of its handle, took on, with the help of the curvature of the handle, the aspect of a heel and the whole object presented the silhouette of a slipper on tiptoe like those of dancers. Cinderella was certainly returning from the ball! The actual length of the spoon a minute ago had nothing definite about it, had nothing to contradict this, stretching towards the infinite as much in great size and small: in fact the little slipper-heel presided over the spell cast, containing in itself the very *source* of the *stereotype* (the heel of this shoe heel could have been a shoe, whose heel itself . . . and so on). The wood, which had seemed intractable, took on the transparency of glass. From then on the slipper, with the shoe heel multiplying, started to look vaguely as if it were moving about alone . . .

The dense streams of association and exposition prompted by such *trouvailles* are intended to embody the inexhaustible richness of the mind's powers of connection when they are properly unleashed, yet Breton's compulsive cross-referencing also suggests a buried fear of the kinds of experience that refuse all transmutation, of the "empty moments" that remain stubbornly unmagical. His millennial claims for the powers of Surrealism never wholly disguise the personal anxieties motivating his quest for the Philosopher's Stone.

In the *Manifesto of Surrealism* of 1924, Breton argued that "it is perhaps childhood that comes closest to one's 'real life'. . . . Thanks to Surrealism, it seems that opportunity knocks a second time." His very occasional references to his own desperately lonely years suggest though that he wouldn't have much relished reliving them. "For a long time," he tells his 8-month-old daughter in the touching letter with which he concludes *Mad Love*, "I thought it was the gravest

Courtesy The Harry Ransom Research Center, Austin, Texas

ANDRÉ BRETON, PHOTO-BOOTH SHOTS, c. 1925

insanity to give life. In any case I held it against those who had given it to me." The only child of a police ledger clerk and a former seamstress, Breton was born in Normandy, but he grew up mainly in Pantin, a drab industrial suburb of Paris. He particularly loathed his mother, whom he caricatures as a petit bourgeois shrew, "authoritarian, petty, spiteful, preoccupied with social integration and success."

Although disdainful of such social aspirations, Breton performed well in school, and on passing his *baccalauréat* reluctantly opted for a medical career. As early as his late teens, however, he began seeking out leading literary figures of the day—Valéry, Apollinaire, Reverdy. Poetry offered Breton not only an escape from "the walls of the real that enclose us," as an early poem puts it, but a means of forming the friendships his childhood lacked. His fellow Surrealist Philippe Soupault once described Breton as "a solitary man who could not live alone." Paralleling Breton's hunger for the marvelous was his hunger for the group—preferably one formed and presided over by himself.

Certainly Breton spent the decade preceding the official launch of Surrealism in 1924 gathering disciples in an almost Christ-like fashion—first Soupault, then Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Benjamin Péret, Robert Desnos, Antonin Artaud. . . . Initially, his program was largely determined by the dandyish Jacques Vaché's nihilist concept of "*umour*" (that is, humor without the *h*), which Vaché glossed in one of his war letters to Breton as a sense of "the theatrical (and joyless) futility of everything." Vaché was nearly three years at or near the Front, and his bitterly absurdist epistles to Breton anticipate the derangements of Dada and early Surrealism. Vaché haughtily disdained the "tainted charms" of literature, and these letters are his only surviving writings. On January 6, 1919, Vaché and a soldier friend were found dead of a drug overdose in a hotel room in Nantes. "His death was admirable," Breton later wrote, "in that it could pass for accidental." Breton believed, what's more, that Vaché had concealed from his friend the likely effects of so much opium and thus committed one last wholly characteristic "*humorous deception.*"

Much as he approved of Vaché's heroic indifference, Breton seems not to have seriously contemplated suicide himself, though it was intended that his drama *If You Please*, written in collaboration with Philippe Soupault, would end with one of its authors, picked at random, blowing his brains out on stage. In the event, neither felt up to the challenge. It was with Soupault also that Breton first began experimenting with automatic writing: over a period of eight days in the summer of 1919 they set about composing "as rapidly as possible without any intervention on the part of critical faculties." The resulting text, *The*

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Magnetic Fields, is a beautiful, often hilarious stream of images, by turns plangent, despairing, mysterious, outraged. Breton found the process of spontaneous composition dangerously intoxicating, and even began to fear for his sanity. "Hallucinations lay in wait," he later confessed; "I don't believe I'm exaggerating when I say that it couldn't go on any longer."

The Magnetic Fields is dedicated to Jacques Vaché, and its headlong rush toward "The End of Everything" (the title of the final chapter) figuratively emulates Vaché's suicidal impetus. Casting aroung for less destructive ways of fulfilling the ideals of *umour*, Breton turned to Dada's chief spokesman, the gleefully anarchic Tristan Tzara, who arrived in Paris in early 1920 and at once began organizing Dadaist demonstrations calculated to attract as much publicity as possible. Breton was excited by Tzara's brazen iconoclasm, but he felt that Tzara's events, in many of which he participated, were tedious and silly. He also disliked being twitted and overruled by the rambunctious Tzara, who seemed to him motivated more by love of scandal than by revolutionary fervor. He finally denounced Tzara as a "publicity-mongering impostor" and began prospecting for other means of undamming the subversive energies of the unconscious.

Similar to the process of automatic writing were the group's "sleeping fits," initiated by the poet René Crevel in 1922. Under séance-like conditions, Crevel discovered himself able to slip into a hypnotic slumber during which he improvised gruesome *Maidoror*-ish narratives and pronounced terrifying Gothic curses. Breton was exhilarated—"a dazzling new day is dawning" he declared—and he instigated sleeping fit sessions each evening. Unable to enter the state of trance himself, Breton took dictation and printed the results in the group's current magazine, the ironically titled *Littérature*. The sleepers soon took to expressing their dreams in actions as well as in words. On one occasion Breton discovered Crevel preparing to hang himself from a coatrack, while Robert Desnos had to be restrained after chasing Paul Eluard across the lawn with a knife. Alarmed, Breton terminated the experiment. As he had discovered before with automatic writing, the thinnest of thin lines separated liberation from madness.

Breton was never averse, though, to impressing his enemies with the violent dimension of his revolution. Incensed by a slur on Picasso's name at one of Tzara's final Dada events, the Surrealists swarmed on stage, pinioned the offender and ordered him to leave the theater; and when he refused, Breton swung at him with his cane and fractured his arm. Group members were forever disrupting cultural events of which they disapproved, attacking performers, getting beaten up by stage hands, returning to the fray. Their most notorious sabotage occurred at an official banquet for the Symbolist poet Saint-Pol-Roux, which coincided with the outbreak of the Rif War in Morocco. The Surrealists circulated a pamphlet denouncing France's involvement, and began chanting anti-patriotic slogans. In the ensuing mêlée Soupault, swinging from the chandelier, hurled crockery about the room, while below, Desnos, Aragon and Breton did battle to the utterance.

This particular protest inspired united and widespread condemnation in the press. Though Breton, the group's master strategist, now despised Tzara, he had learned from him the value of scandal to an artistic movement. In his various manifestoes, on the other hand, Breton attempted to present Surrealism as an all-embracing philosophy capable of healing the major dichotomies of Western civilization. In the pamphlet "Legitimate Defense," published in 1926, he figures himself and his Surrealist comrades as elect redeemers of the world, obeying "an unprecedented *summons* by virtue of which we are chosen to give and to receive what no men before us have given or received, to preside over a kind of dizzying exchange without which we would be unconcerned with the meaning of our lives."

Despite his hatred of all institutions, Breton was keen to organize the group on an official basis, and even opened a Bureau of Surrealist Research. Attendance at weekly café meetings was compulsory. As his concerns grew increasingly politicized, Breton attempted to establish links with the French Communist Party, in the hope that Surrealism might become the dominant aesthetic mode of a post-revolutionary communist world order. Though an astute manipulator of the Surrealists' internal realpolitik, Breton was much too idealistic to last long in any established political organization. There followed years of fencing between the two basically incompatible groups. Finally Breton denounced Stalin, at the time of the show trials, as "the great negator and principal enemy of the proletarian revolution, and the most inexcusable of murderers."

If Breton's political involvements and his authoritarian style of leadership be-

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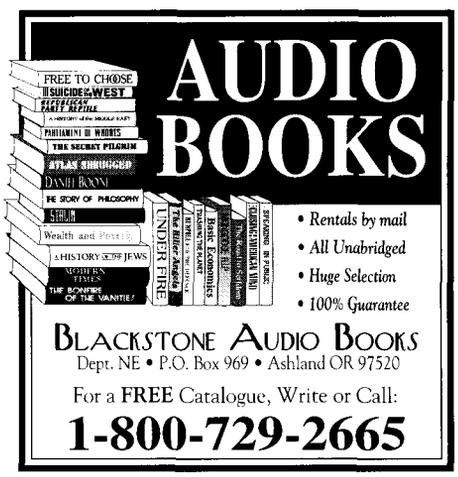

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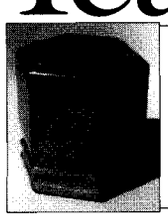
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tray his urge to control people and wield power, his erotic entanglements repeatedly reveal the opposite impulse, his desire to cast himself upon the ineffable waters of chance. Much of the appeal of figures such as Nadja or X in *The Communicating Vessels* lies in their elusiveness and unpredictability, their refusal—or inability—to behave according to the dictates of common sense. Nadja in particular incarnated for Breton the principle of "total subversion," rather as Vaché had done some ten years earlier. Driving back to Paris one night, she "pressed her foot down on mine on the accelerator, tried to cover my eyes with her hands in the oblivion of an interminable kiss, desiring to extinguish us, doubtless forever, save to each other, so that we should collide at full speed with the splendid trees along the road. What a test of life, indeed!" Needless to say, Breton declined the pact, but declared the experience the perfect image of true love.

In fact, Breton found the "eccentricities" of the original of Nadja more elating in theory than in practice. He soon cut off all relations with her, and the following year she was committed to a psychiatric hospital in southern Paris, where she was visited by Aragon and Eluard, but not by Breton. Towards the book's conclusion he adduces the "well-known lack of frontiers between *nonmadness* and madness," yet his behavior again suggests how acutely aware he was of the gap between his own self-possession and the derangements that he celebrated in others.

Breton was himself to be betrayed—or so he thought—by nearly all of his early comrades in the Surrealist movement: from the 1930s on, its history reads like one long internecine feud, an endless succession of trials, defections, suicides, expulsions and recriminations. By the time of the Second World War, which he spent in New York as a political refugee, Surrealism had effectively escaped Breton's grasp, though he could never admit this; and it had begun to modify the world's expressive means in styles that Breton neither foresaw nor approved. To borrow Auden's phrase, it had become its admirers.

On his return to Paris in 1946, Breton set about reconvening the group which he now hoped would play a major role in the reconstruction of Europe, only to find the existentialists determining the postwar intellectual and cultural climate. Breton and his admiring entourage of young but not especially talented Surrealists found themselves increasingly marginalized. Movements ranging from the Abstract Expressionists in New York to the *Tel Quel* group in Paris paid homage to Surrealism's decisive impact on their own development, but Surrealism itself—or at least Breton's purist vision of it—had become part of the history books.

Mark Polizzotti's excellent biography is the first full-length account of Breton's life and achievement to be published in English. It is a remarkable work of scholarship and a superbly controlled narrative feat. Polizzotti skillfully braids together Breton's highly individual intellectual development, his complex relationships with Surrealist friends such as Aragon, Eluard and Soupault, and his turbulent emotional history. In addition, Polizzotti reveals the extent to which these distinctions scarcely existed for Breton: always open about his affairs, Breton frequently prided himself on living as if in "a glass-house," and his best writing continually insists on the indivisible nature of all experience.

It has become customary to think of Breton's influence on other artists as somehow outweighing his own colossal *oeuvre*. (The first two volumes of Gallimard's complete edition run to almost 2,000 pages each, and two more are projected.) Under his aegis, artists as varied as Yves Tanguy and Aimé Césaire, René Magritte and Luis Buñuel, found themselves discovering new aesthetic resources and freedoms of expression. Breton, of course, tended to revile anyone who later became successful, or at least earned any money. He anagramatically transformed Salvador Dalí into Avida Dollars, and even the more-Surreal-than-thou Max Ernst was booted out of the group in 1954, for winning the grand prize at the Venice Biennale. Oddly, given his oft-avowed intention of "killing art," Breton ended up perhaps the most significant aesthetic catalyst of the twentieth century.

His own works, though, have proved less assimilable than those he enabled. Breton despised all existing literary genres, and his wholly original amalgams of autobiography, polemic, photographs, art criticism, alchemy, philosophy, dream-analysis, *que sais-je encore!* defy easy categorization. Inevitably Breton has been recovered for the French literary tradition that he so opposed; but exactly what niche he and his writings should occupy in the tradition seems as ambiguous as the enigmatic communication that he receives at the conclusion of the "*prophetic*" poem "Sunflower":

> And yet the cricket that sang in the
> ashen hair
> One evening near the statue of
> Étienne Marcel
> Aimed a nod of recognition at me
> André Breton it said is passing by.

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The Shores of Identity

BY NADER MOUSAVIZADEH

Black Sea
by Neal Ascherson

(Hill and Wang, 306 pp., $23)

An original thought or sentence on the nature of nationalism is a rare thing these days. A flood of books on that subject has come out of the end of the cold war and difficult, intangible questions of identity, community and purity have become staples of any sermon on the new Europe. Rarely, though, is the rigor demanded of other political and philosophical questions demanded of writings about nationalism. Still, once in a while, comes a treatment that is both rigorous and evocative. Neal Ascherson's remarkable *Black Sea* is such a book.

A travel book that never stoops to the banal or quotidian, a skeptical work of history that marvels at history's ironies, *Black Sea* is one of the most original works on the tangled skein of identity and nationality to have emerged from the recent ruins of nationalism's holy wars. Ascherson's subject is the Black Sea in all its reflections: its peoples, its archaeology, its history, its ecology. The account follows an explorer's path north and east around the Black Sea coast, and, chronologically, from the seventh century B.C. to the last decade of the twentieth century. It is by no means an exhaustive history of that vast and complex region, nor does it purport to be. Quietly, unambitiously,

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Ascherson tells a set of Black Sea stories, which together form a unique narrative of "the interplay of circumstances," of the hybrids of culture and ethnicity, of the irrepressible links between ages and peoples.

Home to Turks, Georgians, Russians, Bulgarians, Romanians and Ukrainians, the Black Sea region is also where Europe and Asia meet. And if, as Santayana wondered, these regions or notions are "anything more than parts of the same earth separated by the Hellespont," it is, Ascherson argues, due in large part to the work of intellectuals with nations to create and enemies to conquer. Throughout his book, Ascherson seizes on the strand of nationalist theory that emphasizes the creative powers of nationalist intellectuals. Moreover, for the peoples of the Black Sea, nationalism has been an import "from inland." On the coast, "the differences were blatant and numerous and ethnic tensions were never absent," a place where "these matters were not so much debated as lived." That the power of nationalism is neither diminished nor questioned in cultures profoundly alien to an ideology of purity is one of the lessons of *Black Sea*, a lesson that teaches as much about the fragility of pluralism as about the potency of ideas in politics, however crude or delusional.

It is the Sea as the site of arrival, of migration, of beginnings and endings that has captured Ascherson's imagination. Before opening his book of stories, Ascherson disabuses his readers of any illusions of peaceful pluralism in this most mixed and multiethnic of regions. The fate of Bosnia echoes in these lines:

> Peoples who live in communion with other people, for a hundred or a thousand years, do not always like them—may, in fact, have always disliked them. As individuals, "the others" are not strangers, but neighbors, often friends. But my sense of Black Sea life, a sad one, is that latent mistrust between cultures is immortal.
>
> Necessity, and sometimes, fear binds such communities together. . . . It is true that communal savagery—pogroms, "ethnic cleansing" in the name of some fantasy of national unity, genocide—has usually reached the Black Sea communities from elsewhere, an import from the interior. But when it arrives the apparent solidarity of centuries can disappear within days or hours. The poison, upwelling from the depths, is absorbed by a single breath.

This is a crucial notion—the "import" of nationalism—that is both chastening and encouraging, for it insists on the possibility of pluralism even while it exposes its frailty. Then again, no study of Black Sea life could conclude any differently, for its history is that of armies and peoples struggling and mingling in their efforts to conquer and settle, to find new homes and leave old ones. And in this sense, perhaps, Black Sea life can serve as a harbinger of struggles elsewhere, a harbinger that inevitably unsettles as much it promises.

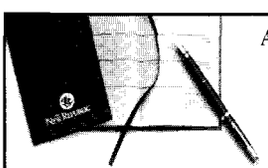
Surveying the history of migrations to and around the Black Sea, Ascherson recounts the progression of peoples from the Scythians of the eighth century B.C. to the first Ionian Greek colonists a century later to the successive arrivals of Sarmatians, Goths, Huns, Khazars, Venetians, Mongols, Turks, Cossacks, Russians and Germans over the next twenty-six centuries. The history of the Black Sea, as Ascherson tells it, is the story of how these many tribes and nations at one time settled, were then driven away or subsumed under a new empire, but always left their marks, archaeologically and demographically. His travels take him to many of the digs and ruins of the area, and each site becomes an occasion for remembrance.

Wherever he stops and remembers, however, Ascherson also thinks, and the idea that runs through his every account and every description is the idea of migration, of mongrelization, what he calls "the basic European nightmare: a terror of peoples who move." Whether he is telling the story of the Tatars of Crimea, or the Cossacks, the Lazi, the Pontic Greeks, the Abkhazis, the Sarmatians, or of one woman whom he calls "the last Sarmatian," Ascherson is telling the story of *Völkerwanderung*, of eternal migrants, whose expulsion in one century leads to return the next, and to diaspora nationalism the century after.

This is how he begins the story of that last Sarmatian, Karolina Sobańska: "In the literary museum at Odessa, in a cabinet which once belonged to a Polish family in the 1820s, there is a miniature portrait of a woman. She is blonde, blue-eyed, conventionally pretty, with flowers in her hair and a low-cut 'peasant' dress. The women who sit on chairs keeping an eye on the visitors say that this is a picture of Karolina Sobańska, the lover of Mickiewicz." Sobańska, who was also Polish, met Mickiewicz while she was the mistress of Colonel-General Jan Witt, the chief of Russian secret police, and aide to Count Mikhail Vorontsov who became governor of Odessa only ten years after Richelieu had left that post for France. The Witt-Sobańska salon in Odessa, a city which included large Jewish and Ukrainian populations, attracted artists and intellectuals, and within a year of each other Pushkin (who was writing *Eugene Onegin* at the time) and Mickiewicz were attracting the careful attention of Odessa's elite.

Adam Mickiewicz, the nationalist poet of Poland who had been banned from the Polish provinces of the Russian Empire, was a curious kind of nationalist. He was born in a part of Lithuania that now belongs to Belarus, and "he opened *Pan Tadeusz*, the most beloved work in the Polish language, with the words: 'Lithuania, my fatherland.'" Driven into exile at the age of 24, Mickiewicz never returned to Poland. For him, diaspora nationalism became the Poland he would never see. And though it seems that Sobańska and Mickiewicz loved each other, and though Mickiewicz insisted that she was spying for Poland even while living with the Tsar's secret agent, Sobańska never let Russia down, and sold out her Polish nationalist friends for the rest of her life. Mickiewicz is thought only to have met her one other time, between 1847 and 1850, at a Paris dinner party where Balzac was seated next to the guest of honor, "the great Polish poet."

What fascinates about this tale—



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more than just the extraordinary culture of Odessa in the early nineteenth century—is the depth of Sobańska's betrayal of her country, and her obsessive devotion to that betrayal, with its absurd, and ironic, Black Sea roots. Confessing her abundant revulsion at the sight of her countrymen, in a letter to the supreme commander of the Tsar's secret police, she describes them as "creatures who filled me with horror . . . whose very contact gave me the sensation of being licked by a rabid dog." How could she despise them like this, her idealistic lovers whose passion was only for independence? The answer is that she didn't consider herself a Pole at all. She considered herself a Sarmatian.

The Sarmatians were an Indo-European people who controlled a Bosporan kingdom for over five hundred years until 400 A.D. They followed the Scythians, known to us through Herodotus's *Histories*, onto the Pontic Steppe, but they are remembered only through their descendants, the modern-day Ossetians of the Caucasus. The Sarmatians of myth became, in the seventeenth century, the forefathers not of the Polish people, but of the Polish nobility, which insisted on being a superior race as well as a superior caste. That this was a transparent fiction did nothing to weaken its potency, and once it added xenophobia and a geopolitical destiny to its ideology, it persisted until its own chauvinism led to the second and third partitions of Poland: it "achieved precisely what its ultra-conservative patriotism sought to prevent. It allowed foreigners to destroy Poland and Polish independence."

Ascherson describes the track of Sobańska's betrayal as leading "through a hall of mirrors into a chapel with a self-portrait above the altar: the monstrous solipsism of conservative aristocracy." To this one can add those other images of identity and culture which reflected in Sobańska's hall of mirrors, images which only Odessa and the culture of the Black Sea could have produced. This was, after all, a Polish Mata Hari whose Odessa lovers included a Russian dissident writer, the chief of the Tsar's secret police, and a Polish nationalist who wrote of Lithuania as his homeland. In this particular hall of mirrors, any settled notions of nationality seem positively ridiculous, any idea of purity a fantasy. As Ascherson calmly points out: "Those who cherish and revive their 'native' language usually have ancestors who spoke a different one. Those who claim 'pure' lineage, in the genetic sense, are all to some degree mongrels."

It is one of the paradoxes of Black Sea life that it has given rise to as many ideologies of nationhood as it has miscegenated populations. The Pontic Greeks were (and are) one such people, and telling their story Ascherson describes the creation of a national identity whose elements—land, language, ethnicity—could not have been less stable, their origins more fractured. It is the story of a people for whom history's rhymes are remembered with great fervency, for their culture is ever-vulnerable, the fear always present that their lives will write the last lines of the national epic. From the early thirteenth century, a Greek settlement at Trebizond in the southeastern corner of the Black Sea coast has maintained a life distinct from both its foreign neighbors and from the other Greek colonies around the coast. In the fifteenth century it grew to become the largest concentration of Greek-speaking people in the Hellenic or Byzantine worlds, and even after the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453, the city remained Greek.

"Who did they think they were," Ascherson asks, "in this pre-nationalist age?" They found identity in three things: in belonging to a place, in not being Western (Roman Catholic) Christians, and in feeling themselves to be part of an ancient superior empire, what is now referred to as Byzantium. But with the rise of Russian power in the Black Sea region in the early nineteenth century, and the appearance of a Greek nationalist ideology, their position became increasingly precarious, culminating with the *Katastrofē* of 1923, when the Greek-Turkish war led to the mass population exchanges that eradicated Greek life in Asia Minor. Visiting Trebizond, Ascherson everywhere finds ruins, but, he notes, "these are hate-ruins, rather than time-ruins." This is how the Turkish guidebooks, in a classic example of nationalist revisionism, described the 1923 *Katastrofē*: "After the proclamation of the Republic, the Greeks who lived in the region returned to their own country, and the monastery of Sumela was evacuated and abandoned." Ascherson's response is altogether fitting: "Their own country? Returned? They had lived in the Pontos for nearly three thousand years. Their Pontic dialect was not understandable to twentieth-century Athenians."

But none of this mattered when purity's toll was exacted on these consummate cosmopolitans, when the fantasies of race darkened the common skies of Black Sea life. From the mid-1800s to the period of the *Katastrofē*, over 200,000 Greeks fled their ancient lands, to Russia, to Georgia, to Crimea. The fate of fellow Greeks elsewhere in diaspora was no less cruel. However buoyed by the rise of a pan-Hellenism that was to encompass all Greeks throughout the world, the reality was grim. In 1923, Chrysantos, the last Metropolitan of Trebizond, led 164,000 Pontic Greeks "home" to Greece, "home" to a place that felt as alien as any they could have been sent to. None suffered in the inter-war years as severely as the Greeks of the new Soviet Union, 170,000 of whom were expelled to Siberia and Central Asia during the purges of the mid-1930s. And in 1949, the Soviets completed the *Katastrofē*: the entire Greek population of the Crimea was eliminated, with only a minority surviving the expulsion to Central Asia.

How to explain this disaster? Ascherson suggests that Stalin was threatened by the Greek sense of transnational family, by their cosmopolitanism. What is interesting is that

Epitaph for Mariana Gryphius, His Brother Paul's Little Daughter

Born on the run, ambushed by sword and flame,
suckled by smoke, my mother's bitter bargain,
my father's midnight fear, I swam to light
just as the fire's jaws devoured my country.
I took one look at this world and said goodbye.
I knew in a flash all that it had to offer.
If you count my days, I vanished when I was young.
But I was old if you add the things I suffered.

To the Virgin Mary

No room at the crowded inn for you. And why?
The world itself is too cramped for what's inside you.

ANDREAS GRYPHIUS (1616-64)
—translated from the German by Christopher Benfey

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this very cosmopolitanism became the source of a later campaign to return "home," a kind of diaspora patriotism which may "remain little more than a luxury of the imagination, but there are," as Ascherson argues, "times when, suddenly and desperately, these cheques on the Bank of Symbolism are presented for payment." Indeed, late-twentieth-century nationalism may be seen as an emblem of precisely this kind of diaspora patriotism. Finally, with the fall of the Soviet Union, there has been a new exodus of Pontic Greeks returning "home" to Greece, and if they are not exactly welcome, that should not come as a surprise. The rank opportunism of nationalist ideology knows no peer: those who in times of war would be called "brothers" are now fictitious relatives who'd better go back to where they came from. Nationalism's memory is essentially selective; and Us and Them is often a matter of crude convenience.

Ascherson's stories are mostly stories of loss and destruction, of follies and myths, but there is at least one hopeful tale of a people as a work in progress, a nation which even today is experiencing a genuine renaissance. The Lazi are a small people numbering perhaps 250,000, who live in the northeastern corner of Turkey, between Georgia and the Black Sea. They are ethnically distinct from the Turks, speak a different language and maintain their own customs, practices and manners of dress. Given the threat of Turkey's Kemalist ideology, which has wreaked such havoc on the Kurds, they have kept a low profile, until now. To ask "Who are the Lazi?" is, as Ascherson says, to "be at once lost in the building-site of nationalist definitions." For they are a people with seemingly few ties to their region or their neighbors, and, moreover, a people uncommonly uninterested in their own identity. They are a "pre-nationalist nation."

Most significantly, they have maintained a perfect equanimity at the prospect of their language dying out, insisting that its institutionalization in written form would jeopardize their insulation from the world, and thus threaten their distinctness. Then one day a German philologist named Wolfgang Feurstein appeared at their door. He seized upon this *Volk* as the site for his very own Herderian experiment. He would bring them an alphabet, create one from their oral traditions, and thus ensure a literate culture that would sustain a distinct nationality. Dismissing liberal criticisms of ethnicity as a purely subjective phenomenon, Feurstein tells Ascherson that "I saw this lighting-up of faces and eyes when they understood that I valued their culture. Call them a nation, a folk, an ethnicity—I don't care." If Ascherson elsewhere seems critical of the role of intellectuals in fanning the flames of nationalism, his skepticism evaporates at the sight of Feurstein's grand project: to save a culture by introducing a written language. From this it is only a short step to Benedict Anderson's emphasis on the role of print-capitalism in the creation of a national identity. The birth of a Lazi nation seems only a matter of time.

The prospect of a Lazi nation surviving the Kemalist campaign of purity is indeed a cheering one, and one that inspires real faith in the survival of difference. What it does not inspire, and could never promise, is hope for a community of difference, where Turks peacefully tolerate the presence of a different nation, not only within the boundaries of the state, but also in their midst. Ascherson's skepticism toward liberal pieties about multiethnic communities living in peace is, in the end, right. Yet the determinism of ethnic conflict so blithely proclaimed by many observers of the Balkan conflict is equally misguided: in the Balkans, as well as on the Black Sea coast, there have been centuries of peaceful coexistence, even tolerance and intermarriage. What seems inevitable, though, is that as long as a community survives, so will its prejudices, its fantasies of chosenness, its belief in its own superiority. And to "demonstrate that tradition is wrong or invented does not put an end to this story. A claim to national independence does not fail simply because its legitimizing version of national history is partly or wholly untrue—as it often is." The role of the invented and the imagined in the visceral work of identity is, alas, irreducible.

"Barbarians," Ascherson remarks, "are always so-called; they do not consider themselves to be barbarous." Ascherson's Black Sea world is choking on the nostalgia of nationalism, the nostalgia of so-calling the Other. His book is, in the end, a great contribution to clarity about nationalism, and about history. Ascherson recognizes that the nation remains the most powerful source of identity—and also that the place of pluralism in the nation-state is a fragile one. And yet he wisely insists that such places can exist, in a world of peoples whose roots are as deep as they are migratory. They can exist, because on the Black Sea, and in every mongrel society, they always have. •

TRB *continued from page 6*

things, too. The same tradeoff holds in America, where moral, not legal, sanction is the issue. Yes, it is unfair, even inhumane, to stigmatize people who get divorced. They are victims of circumstance—and the characteristic ability of liberals to *see* such people as victims is truly a sign of enlightenment. Still, the fact remains that attaching no social cost to divorce also has its inhumanities.

The idea here isn't that a moral or legal code should be used to keep zillions of people trapped in unhappy unions. Monogamy, though not wholly natural, often brings rewards that justify the effort it requires. That's why Ireland's new law won't trigger an avalanche of divorces. Still, Western social history suggests a slow snowball effect. The more thinkable divorce becomes, the more everyday marital irritations start seeming like irreconcilable differences. The resulting rise in the divorce rate makes divorce even more thinkable, which makes more differences seem irreconcilable, and so on.

This is the usually unspoken logic behind the pope's zero tolerance for divorce. Such absolutism does trap a few couples, and their children, in genuine pain; but freeing them can put society on a slippery slope toward even more pain. The Irish Bishops Conference, in calling the divorce referendum an example of "misguided compassion," may well be right. And, right or wrong, the bishops are at least aware of a basic truth most of us prefer not to dwell on: our moral influence goes beyond our local environment. A single divorce alters, however marginally, the prevalence of divorce, and thus the future likelihood of divorce, and the welfare of future children.

The standard liberal way of thinking about moral sanction pays little mind to such subtleties. In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill said that what people do is their own business so long as it doesn't affect other people fairly directly. But much of what we do—in many realms, not just in marriage—affects other people in tiny and barely apparent yet generally predictable ways. Humans are by nature exquisitely sensitive to prevailing norms, so each of us is in some diffuse way a role model. Mill's formulation—as popularly construed, at least—is a bit too easy.

Before the Irish referendum, an ABC news report ended with this summary: "With divorce, say those against it, marriage breakdown rates will soar; without it, say those in favor, Ireland will remain repressive and intolerant." Stop! You're *both* right. If liberals can start treating moral issues with the sophistication of a Certs commercial, that will be progress.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Teasing at sorrow

A FORMAL GROUP PORTRAIT: twenty-six boys and girls (ranging in age from 10 to perhaps 15 years old) four rows, eight children at the top, four at the bottom, seven in each of the two others. The photograph, dated 1924, was taken in Bialystok, Poland. It is of the mandolin orchestra at the I. L. Peretz School. (This Peretz was one of the masters of modern Yiddish literature, an uncle three generations removed.) The photograph has been haunting me since the moment I saw it in a booklet accompanying an exquisitely evocative CD, *Songs of Our Fathers* (Acoustic Disc), put out by Andy Statman and David Grisman, masters of beebop, bluegrass and *klezmer*. It has been haunting me not just because one could assume that all of the people in this picture are now dead. One might have assumed that even if the Jewish catastrophe in Europe had not happened; or that, at best, the few still living would be quite old, 80, 85, even older. But the fact is that these are men and women who perished in the ghetto of Bialystok, in Birkenau, Belzec, Maidanek, Treblinka, and they perished young, long before their time. They might have been my cousins. Did anyone survive, however, who could remember their names, "to tease," as the Yiddish poet Abraham Sutzkever put it, "at sorrow"?

THIS IS ONE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN the genocide against the Jews and the genocide against the Bosnian Muslims. This last one was stopped, as it were, midway. (And let us not forget what stopped the genocide: the direct intervention of American diplomatic and military might. For Congress now to deny Clinton the chance finally to end the war in Bosnia would be unconscionable.) This time, there will be many who remember the murdered. But in Dayton, during the three weeks before Thanksgiving, the American negotiators were very much into the business of forgetting. "IN U.S. EYES, 'GOOD' MUSLIMS AND 'BAD' SERBS DID A SWITCH," a *New York Times* headline announces. The accompanying article, by those journalists—Roger Cohen, Stephen Engelberg, Elaine Sciolino—to whom serious historians of the Balkan conflagration will long be indebted, explains how that switch occurred. Bearing all the traces of a master leaker like Richard Holbrooke, it is nonetheless not an elevating tale. What possibly could bring about the bonding of Slobodan Milosevic, the brute aggressor in the conflict, with Holbrooke and Warren Christopher? Alas, it seems, it didn't take much. Milosevic did some singing at the piano, (a rendition of "Tenderly," according to the *Times*), he displayed a crass geniality, he was able to silence his more recalcitrant Serbian comrades, he played a splendid game of tennis. And, of course, he had the savvy understanding that what is required now may merely be a decent interval for President Clinton. Poof, Milosevic is no longer accountable for the killings he sponsored.

EVEN MORE telling was the American attitude to the Bosnians, a mixture of disdain and dread. Not being able to pronounce the names of the three representatives from Bosnia, the U.S. delegation called them Izzy, Silly and Moe. If only they had been the Three Stooges! But they weren't. Yes, they were sour. But the peace they were obliged to sign entailed the surrender of half their country. So why should they have smiled? To give cover to what was being done to them? They signed because they had no alternative. Once the Croatians and the Serbs had made their deal the Bosnian cry for justice had no resonance in the Dayton conference room or, for that matter, elsewhere. The world was bored by the Bosnians. If they had not signed they would have had to swim alone, all alone, nothing more complicated than that. The doleful face of Alija Izetbegovic said it all, wise and not a little world-weary. This cosmopolitan Muslim, who had faced down the Communists and spent time in jail for doing so, would not pretend to happiness. For, once again in Europe, a small people had been beaten up and beaten, this time not in Bialystok but in Bosnia. The president of Bosnia would get what he could for his decimated nation, courtesy of Mr. Holbrooke, without whom, it must be said, he would have gotten even less. Izetbegovic knew that the map of peace was an expression of the map of war, almost a carbon copy, and he said so. As far as the Americans were concerned, that was his mistake. "[U]nfailingly polite" is how the *Times* characterized Secretary Christopher. But the unfazed and unflappable lawyer was rattled when the Bosnians insisted on telling the truth. So rattled that, on one occasion at least, he started yelling—this bloodless maker of contracts, mind you, actually yelling—at the president of Bosnia. Christopher seems never to have been stirred by the atrocities inflicted on the Bosnians during nearly four years of war, not even at the last mass murder outside Srebrenica. But he couldn't stand hearing about them in Dayton.

THERE WERE TWO PEACE PROCESSes going on at the same time: the one around the dismembered body of Bosnia and the other between Israel and the Arabs. Each of these was premised on a map. The Bosnian map was what the peacemakers called, without embarrassment, a realistic map. This meant that the peace lines would be imposed more-or-less where the armies had stopped, with small adjustments here and there, even though this made the winner of the war the hands-down winner of the peace. The Serbs got exactly what they wanted when they started the war, maybe even more than what they imagined. The Middle East map follows an altogether different logic. The 1967 war was started by the Arab states, as was the 1973 war, for that matter. They lost both. And, at the end, Israel held some of the very territory from which the Arabs had launched their wars. But the map on which the emerging (and inevitably fragile) peace will be based is not the post-1967 map but the pre-1967 map, the antebellum lines restored, even for Syria which, in a strange alliance with Iran, an alliance of secular Ba'athists with hyper-pious Shi'a, continues to wage war against Israel through supine southern Lebanon. Any other than these antebellum lines would be unthinkable, Warren Christopher and the other peace processors tell us. In Bosnia, then, the aggressors are rewarded. But give them their grotesque due: they won the war. In the Middle East the aggressors are also rewarded. But they did not win the war: they were trounced by their intended victim. Why, in one place, is a cruel reality blithely confirmed and, in another, a rather more ambiguous reality passionately overturned?

MARTIN PERETZ

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